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George Seferis

The Cats of St. Nicholas*

But deep inside me sings
the Fury's lyreless threnody:
my heart, self-taught, has lost
the precious confidence of hope . . .
AESCHYLUS, *Agamemnon*, 990 ff.

"That's the Cape of Cats ahead," the captain said to me,
pointing out a low stretch of shore through the fog,
the beach deserted; it was Christmas day—
". . . and in the distance towards the West the wave gave birth to
Aphrodite;
they call the place the Greek's Rock.
Left ten degrees rudder!"
She had Salome's eyes, the cat I lost a year ago;
and old Ramazan—how he would look death square in the eyes,
whole days long in the snow of the East,
under the frozen sun,
days long square in the eyes: the young hearth god.
Don't stop, traveller.
"Left ten degrees rudder," mumbled the helmsman.

. . . maybe my friend was close by,
now between ships,
shut up in a small house with pictures,
searching for windows behind the frames.
The ship's bell struck
like a coin from some city that disappeared
coming to revive in the mind, as it falls,
alms from another time.

---

* See, among other travellers between 1483 and 1750, Estienne de Lusignan, *Description de toute l'isle de Cypre* (Paris, 1580; photo-offset ed.: Les éditions L'oiseau, Ammochostos, 1968):

"So as not to forget how these poisonous reptiles were exterminated from the above-mentioned Promontory, one must note the following: . . . the first Duke of Cyprus had a Monastery built for monks of the order of St. Basil in honour of St. Nicholas, and he gave this whole Promontory to the Monastery on condition that the monks would be bound to feed at least one hundred cats every day, for which they would provide some daily meat in the morning and the evening, at the sound of a small bell, so that the cats would not always feed on venom alone and for the rest of the day and the night would hunt down these serpents. Even in our time this Monastery fed more than forty cats. And thence comes its name, even to this day: the Promontory of the Cats."
—*G.S.*

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"It's strange," the captain said,
"That bell—given what day it is—
reminded me of that other bell, the one the monastery used.
A monk told me the story:
a half-mad monk, a kind of dreamer.

It was the time of the great drought,
forty years without rain,
the whole island devastated,
people died and snakes were born.
This cape had millions of snakes
fat as a man's leg
and full of poison.
In those days the monastery of St. Nicholas
was held by the monks of St. Basil,
and they couldn't work their fields
and they couldn't put their flocks to pasture;
they were saved in the end by the cats they raised.

Every day at dawn a bell would strike
and the crew of cats would move out to battle.
They'd fight the day long, until
the bell would sound the evening feed.
Supper done, the bell would sound again
and out they'd go to fight the night's war.
They say it was a wonderful thing to see them:
some lame, some twisted, others missing
a nose, an ear, their hides in shreds.
So to the sound of four bells a day
months went by, years, season after season.
Wildly obstinate, always wounded,
they annihilated the snakes; but in the end they disappeared:
they just couldn't take in that much poison.
Like a ship gone down
they didn't leave a thing above the surface:
no miaow, no bell even.
Steady as you go!
What could they do, the poor devils,
fighting like that day and night, drinking in
the poisonous blood of those reptiles?
Centuries of poison; generations of poison."
"Steady as you go," echoed the indifferent helmsman.

Wednesday, 5 February 1969

translated by Edmund Keeley

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John Weightman

The Concept of the *AVANT-GARDE*

I HAVE CHOSEN to try to explore the phenomenon of the *avant-garde* for two reasons. In the first place, it has been my lot to find myself involved in the discussion and criticism of contemporary French literature during the development and temporary predominance of an *avant-garde* with which I have been unable fully to sympathise. I am referring to the literary movement known as the *Nouveau Roman*, or New Novel, that has now been superseded to some extent by the *Nouveau Nouveau Roman*, with which, alas, I also have some difficulty. It is a disturbing experience for a critic or a teacher to have to adopt a rather negative attitude towards the material he is supposed to be expounding. Given the general atmosphere, he is bound to ask himself if culture is not marching on into the future and leaving him behind among the fossils of the past, and even though my reservations about this particular *avant-garde* are shared by a number of people whose opinions I respect, I confess to having experienced feelings of guilt and inadequacy, which have led me to reflect on the general nature of *avant-garde* attitudes.

But there is also a much broader and more important reason. For a century-and-a-half, at least, the history of literature, especially in France, has been marked by the emergence of new literary movements—which we may, or may not, wish to call *avant-gardes*—each normally accompanied by a theory of literature. Their succession has gradually led not simply to the belief that literature is subject to change, which is a self-evident fact, but to the rather different conviction that the principles according to which works of literature are composed must undergo continuous alteration if literature is not to stagnate. For instance, a prominent member of the New Novel Group, M. Michel Butor, argues that a writer who works according to the conventions of the preceding generation or generations instead of inventing new ones, is actually poisoning the mind of the public. In other words, the validity or virtue of literature is made to depend on the repeated invention of something new in form or content, this new element being meant to be particularly appropriate to the stage that culture has reached.

It is only a step from this attitude to the view that literature is subject to obsolescence, and that works of art, even good ones, are fully appropriate only to the period at which they are produced. This is part of the thesis that M. Jean-Paul Sartre developed so brilliantly in his essay *Qu'est-ce que la littérature?* (1948) and that he illustrated by an unusual comparison. He said that books are like bananas; their flavour can be properly appreciated only if they are consumed on the spot. It follows that the works of the past must be rather like old bananas; they must have died, partly or completely, with the past, *i.e.*, must have become too commonplace or too incomprehensible to retain much interest for us. This view may seem paradoxical in an age when knowledge of certain aspects at least of the past seems to be more detailed than ever before. Nevertheless, it has been expressed very forcibly by certain famous exponents of *avant-garde* attitudes. Marcel Duchamp drew a moustache on a copy of the Mona Lisa to indicate an irre-

THIS *is the text of Professor Weightman's inaugural lecture given recently at Westfield College in the University of London.*

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verent approach to traditionally admired works. In a book published only a few months ago, the painter, Jean Dubuffet, poured scorn on the idea that any present-day reader or theatre-goer might sincerely enjoy the tragedies of Racine. Even more explicit is a remark by Antonin Artaud, a greatly revered figure at the moment in certain literary and theatrical circles. He declares in his major work *Le théâtre et son double*:

> *Les chefs d'œuvre du passé sont bons pour le passé; ils ne sont pas bons pour nous.*
> (The masterpieces of the past are good for the past, or appropriate to the past, they are no good for us.)

If this doctrine were taken literally, museums, libraries, and most theatres and concert-halls could be closed down, the discussion of literature in the universities would come to an end, and there would be no occasions such as this one. However, I don't think we are meant to consider it as being wholly serious. After all, Artaud himself was inspired by Elizabethan drama and traditional Balinese dancing, both of which are relics of the past. It is, presumably, partly a reaction against undue reverence for the past and an extreme and vivid way of making the point that the past should be subordinated to the present and the future. But the fierce insistence on the present and the future to the detriment of the past has by now, I think, led to a curious situation, not only in literature and art but in other fields too. In France, more perhaps than elsewhere, what we might call the *avant-garde* approach is evident in literary criticism, philosophy, politics, and indeed in all branches of intellectual and artistic activity. Many people now have a strong tendency to accept a given attitude and to find arguments in its favour precisely because of its supposedly up-to-date character. In this way, the fashion of the moment becomes, as it were, a temporary absolute.

But the tendency can go a stage further still. It may lead to the conviction that the most up-to-date phenomenon is the one that has not yet been discovered, but is *just about to be*. This means that the existing state of affairs is always, by definition, expendable and inferior to the future—provided, of course, that the future is being brought about by people who have a suitable contempt for the past. This is the intellectual equivalent of the declaration made by Artaud on the aesthetic level. It is a way of saying not only that we have no need of the masterpieces of the past but also that we can, and should, dispense with the realities and ideas of the past.

The Fluidity of Thought

In case this sounds like an exaggeration, let me take a recent example from French university life. Among the many people who have given accounts of the student revolt of last May is a professor of the University of Nanterre, who writes under the pen-name of Epistémon, and who is, I am told, a former classical scholar, now a teacher of psychology. In his little book, *Ces idées qui ont ébranlé la France* (1968), he tells us that the events of May introduced him to what he calls *le non-savoir*, non-knowledge. (This, presumably, is why he calls himself ironically Epistémon, "the knowing one" or "the learned one.") He says that through being challenged by his students, apparently for the first time, he suddenly realised that he wasn't absolutely sure of anything, that in effect he knew nothing, had no knowledge to impart, and could only step down humbly from his pedestal, as he puts it, and discuss his ignorance with his pupils. This he presents as an exciting and indeed lyrical experience, a sort of revelation or conversion. As I read the passage, I was reminded of the old fable about the Emperor in the invisible robe; it was as if the Emperor himself had discovered he had no clothes on and was delighted with his nakedness. Admittedly, in the context, "non-knowledge" is to some extent a play on words. What Epistémon seems to favour is the rejection of all existing knowledge, in the conviction that something new and better will emerge spontaneously from the resulting vacuum. It is as if he were counting on the approaching moment to provide him with a superior truth, as if the mere fact of moving forward nakedly in time were bound to constitute progress. However, he doesn't explain on what basis he will judge the new truth when it occurs; he just tends to assume that because it will be new, it will be better. And he seems to be so caught up in the excitement of the moment that the possibility of the new truth being a re-issue of an old error never crosses his mind.

Actually, I think that Epistémon's attitude is a mixture, possibly a muddle, of at least three different things. First, it is undeniable that, in the arts subjects as opposed to the sciences,

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knowledge is relative, and that there are moments when any arts specialist may feel that he knows nothing. This is for the obvious reason that, in an arts discipline—and I count Epistémon's psychology as an arts discipline and not yet a fully established science—that part of the subject which can be fully and finally known is less important than the other, speculative part, which is always doubtful. If we are studying French, for instance, we can learn the genders of the nouns, and the rules of grammar, and no theory about the uncertainty of knowledge will excuse us if we get them wrong, just as, in dealing with literature, we mustn't commit factual mistakes, such as confusing the Baron de Montesquieu with the Comte de Montesquiou, or mis-reading a text. There are enough ascertainable details of this kind to keep us endlessly busy, so that no one who is trying to learn French can ever complain of a vacuum of non-knowledge. But, of course, the essential part of the subject, the study of French culture, consists of theories about the facts, and here we enter a field where everything is provisional. We are dealing with a shifting mass of hypotheses, and it is a commonplace that there is no final consensus of opinion about any of them. In other words, the arts subjects are concerned ultimately not with verifiable facts but with moral and aesthetic judgments which are never completely settled, since they are not yet definable in scientific terms, and we who make these judgments are organic creatures living in time. But if Epistémon didn't know this already, I cannot imagine how he functioned as a university teacher before the events of May, since it is the business of such a teacher always to be distinguishing between the known and the unknown, and to be assessing degrees of plausibility of the probable.

Secondly, he may have been half-remembering the well-known procedure of the *tabula rasa*, which consists of making a clean sweep of one's opinions until one can test them again according to a new set of criteria. There are two distinguished exponents of this procedure in French history—the philosopher Descartes and the poet and thinker Paul Valéry. However, the procedure is not compatible with non-knowledge, since its aim is, precisely, to reconstruct all knowledge, past or present, on a sounder basis. It is very close to the technique of Socrates, the first university teacher, who went on failing to understand and proclaiming his ignorance until, by a process of elimination and development, he hit upon a provisionally satisfactory formulation, or to the sceptical attitude expressed by Montaigne's *"Que sais-je?"*, which conveys a sense of the fluidity of thought. Socrates, Montaigne, Descartes and Valéry may have been doubtful about the stability of knowledge, but they spent all their time trying to arrive at knowledge.

Since Epistémon makes play with the term "non-knowledge," I think that, in his case, there is a third element which is more important, and this is what I would call the *avant-garde* itch to jettison the past because it is the past and to hurry on the future, even though the future may be so vague as to be quite formless. This, one might think, is carrying imprudence to the point of irrationality. It can be seen as a kind of intellectual catastrophism, an urge to throw the baby out with the bath-water. But for a long time now, *avant-garde* attitudes have been marked by an extremism which is deliberately irrational. This is indicated, amongst other things, by the contemporary American expression "way-out," which seems to mean both belonging to the extreme *avant-garde* and remote from the norms of reason.

If I had time,[1] I could quote an indefinite number of other examples to show how the

[1] Since I wrote the above comment on Epistémon, the *Guardian*, as it happens, has published an article by Roger Poole ("Universities of the Future," 31 Jan. 1969) which explains the English "students' revolt" in terms very similar to those of Epistémon. Many sentences are a direct echo of *avant-garde* attitudes I have just referred to, *e.g.*:

> "'Facts' are much-despised, lower-order munitions of the universities, as out of date as the rifles of the Crimean War. These arsenals of facts should be kept discreetly in the background and the University should not 'impose' these facts upon the students if they don't want to be told about them."
>
> "The University is there to study the future. What students really want are facts about the future, and teachers are judged harshly if they cannot supply them."
>
> "Who needs the Odes of Horace, of Marvell, of Keats? The absolute effective model of beat poetry or guitar poetry has made their pretended virtues only too relative... the teacher of poetry should himself be first and foremost a poet... he does not exist as a teacher, for there is, strictly speaking, nothing to learn."
>
> "The text is there to be *felt*, to be *experienced in the here and now*. Historical comment upon it is valueless."

It is not clear to me how far Mr. Poole himself accepts the views he summarises. I should say that

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obsession with movement in time is often linked with irrationalism and extremism—in the French New Novel, in poetry, in the *avant-garde* theatre, in the fine arts and architecture, in the cinema (especially the so-called Underground cinema), and even in what is called the new theology. However, I would like to take the precaution of stating at this point that although I am critical of some *avant-garde* attitudes, I am not proposing to launch a general offensive against the *avant-garde*. It so happens that I have a great admiration for certain parts of it, and I count myself a progressive, not a conservative. Nor am I going to make another last-ditch plea for rationalism at all costs. Although at this moment I am trying to think rationally, I would not commit myself to a simple preference for reason over all forms of the non-rational.

Living in Time

WHAT I HAVE SAID so far is really by way of introduction to my theme: how has it come about that there is now such an obsession with change, such an urge to hurry it on, often in extreme and irrational ways, such a desire, as it were, to soup up time's wingèd chariot? After all, there have been cultures based on the opposite assumption, that is on the belief that change should be resisted as far as possible and that civilisation consisted precisely in protecting certain values and monuments against erosion by time. Indeed, Western civilisation itself was like this over a considerable period of its history, and a majority of people may think that it still should be. But the opposite attitude now appears to be widespread in those circles where art and ideas are being created, that is in the various *avant-gardes*. Therefore, if we make an effort to understand them, we inevitably raise the whole tangled problem of our relationship to time. Obviously I am not going to solve it in a few pages. I can only comment tentatively on certain aspects of it in the light of my reading of French literature.

The French word, *l'avant-garde*, is of course a military term, a very old one which is found in medieval French. No one seems to know when exactly it was first used as a metaphor, but I have been unable to find any examples before the 19th century. According to an Italian scholar, the late Renato Poggioli, whose book, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1968) is an extremely valuable and exhaustive account of various *avant-garde* manifestations and doctrines, the expression was first used metaphorically from about 1845 by French political movements in referring to themselves, but it was only during the very last years of the 19th century that the metaphor was transferred from politics to literary and artistic activities, to which it has since been mainly attached. Poggioli therefore argues that the *avant-garde* in the modern sense is quite recent, and that the first intimations of it go back only as far as the Romantic movement.

I agree that the *avant-garde* mentality, in its exacerbated form, belongs to the last 75 years or so. But if we look at the matter in the context of French literary history, I think it is possible to suggest that what we are dealing with is not an absolutely new and separate phenomenon; it is rather the latest effect of a long and extremely complicated process, which is, of course, the general change-over from the static or cyclical view of human existence to the evolutionary view. Evolutionism is, fundamentally, a scientific concept. Therefore, if my suggestion is correct, the term *avant-garde* is not simply a military metaphor, used first in politics and then transferred to literature and art; it is basically connected with science, and with what is sometimes called the scientific revolution, the replacement of the medieval belief in a finished universe by the modern scientific view of a universe evolving in time. The

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they show the usual confusion between genuine criticism of the University as the home of dry-as-dust learning and an impossible romanticism about starting the world anew with no reference to the past. No doubt the University itself is very much to blame for being as dry-as-dust, through a mistaken belief in "academic objectivity" about matters on which one can only have opinions. The University exists to discuss life, and there is no reason why it should be dull, if life is not dull. But to despise all "facts" is stupid. I have come across "students" who would have liked to know French without actually learning it and to be acquainted with the contents of books without ever opening them. There is not much to be done for these abstentionists until knowledge can be injected with a syringe. Similarly, the assertion that "historical comment is valueless" is nonsensical. What we did and thought yesterday is already a subject for historical speculation, and every use of language is bound, in a sense, to be reflexive and historical. My thesis is that the *avant-garde* belief that the past can, and should be, rejected *en bloc* is itself a tradition by now, and a very questionable one.

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scientific view affected political and social thinking long before it penetrated into literature proper and the fine arts; this is why the metaphor is political before being literary and artistic.

IN FRANCE, THE FIRST REAL SIGNS of the modern evolutionary view occur in the 17th century at the time of the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, but the beginnings of the development can, of course, be traced back to the Renaissance and, beyond the Renaissance, to Ancient Greece where most things existed in embryo. In 17th-century France, the first pale dawn of the scientific view seems to have had little or no effect on the aesthetic attitudes of creative artists, or at least on those attitudes that were part of their conscious make-up. The extraordinary flowering of French neo-classical literature is contemporaneous with the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, yet owes practically nothing to it. The works of Corneille, Racine, Molière, Mme de la Fayette and La Bruyère are brilliantly original, but, strangely enough, are not accompanied by any definite doctrine of originality. On the contrary, the prevailing note is one of subservience to antiquity. The eminent Racinian scholar, Raymond Picard, claims that Racine's tragedies were, in their day, *des œuvres d'avant-garde*, but this was true only objectively, not subjectively. Racine clearly had a static view of human nature. He wasn't trying to say anything new. He thought he was creating timeless aesthetic objects, embodying permanent and universal truths. And even the famous thinkers of the earlier part of the *grand siècle*, Descartes and Pascal, who made mathematical and scientific discoveries, were not looking forward to the future in the modern manner. It is true that as they tried to put their conflicting ideas in order, they made many explosive statements. But we have no reason to believe that they themselves knew just how explosive their thought was. In 17th-century France, the Counter-Reformation and Counter-Renaissance atmosphere was so strong—on the intellectual, if not on the aesthetic level—that it seems to have caused an eddy in the stream of historical consciousness, with strikingly beneficial results for literature because, other things being equal, literature is easier to produce in an atmosphere where the general values of society appear to be settled.

However, in the 18th century, there was a dramatic change that has often been commented on. Although scientific evolutionism was not yet fully established, the major thinkers of the French Enlightenment foresaw, or sensed, its implications. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau, all of whom had some knowledge of science, were in a sense sociologists, trying to understand human life as a dynamic process in time, and as a secular process, which cannot be accounted for in religious terms, and more especially not in terms of the Christian revelation. This is true, I think, even in the case of Voltaire and Rousseau who were technically deists, and not agnostics or atheists. Their deism, although they themselves may have sincerely believed in it, was only a kind of surface dressing over what is essentially a secular enquiry into the nature of man and human history. Like their fellow *philosophes*, they were thus brought into conflict with orthodox Christian theology, which is based on the belief in a relationship, which can be called static, between man inside time and God outside time. The great controversy between science and religion, which was not to occur in England until the middle of the 19th century with the formulation of evolutionary theory by Darwin, had, to all intents and purposes, run its course in France by the end of the 18th century.

This, I think, is the fundamental reason why the conditions favouring the development of the *avant-garde* mentality were present earlier in France than elsewhere, and why the phenomenon was French before becoming European and American. In France, by the end of the 18th century, the modern evolutionary and secular view of the world had pervaded the consciousness at least of the intellectual élite. The situation that Nietzsche was going to express so dramatically in the 19th century in the phrase: "God is dead," already existed before 1789. In fact, most of the great 19th-century themes are already present in the French Enlightenment: there are intimations of Hegel and Marx in Montesquieu, Diderot, and Rousseau; of Darwin and Freud in Diderot; of Freud and Sacher-Masoch in Rousseau; and of Freud, Sacher-Masoch, and Nietzsche in the Marquis de Sade. We might even say that the Marquis de Sade was the first great modern figure to go mad through the death of God, and that this is why he has been resuscitated so fervently during the last half-century or so as the darling of a number of different *avant-gardes*.

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In other words, the intellectual watershed, as I see it, is the Enlightenment, and French Romanticism, when it occurred in the 1820s, was only an episode, although a flamboyant one, in post-Enlightenment history. Romanticism brushed away a great deal of the neo-classical aesthetic which had survived, in spite of the intellectual changes, until the early years of the 19th century. It developed the Promethean element that was inherent in the Enlightenment, but it was also in many ways retrogressive, and was much affected by its coincidence with the Restoration, *i.e.*, with an attempt to put the clock back socially and politically. However, by now, a century-and-a-half later, it is undeniable that not only France but the whole world is living to a very considerable extent according to post-Enlightenment attitudes, which co-exist alongside remnants of pre-Enlightenment attitudes. During this century-and-a-half, many sincere, ingenious and elaborate attempts have been made to effect a compromise between the modern scientific view of the universe and the old Christian view, and the French themselves, from Auguste Comte to Henri Bergson, Father Teilhard de Chardin and Simone Weil, have been particularly active in this field. But it seems obvious to me that no reconciliation has been brought about. The two different ways of looking at things exist side by side, and the extremely tangled aesthetic history of the last 150 years—not to speak of the social and political history—can be seen in terms of the tensions between these attitudes and of the growing predominance of the scientific world-view, which is often apprehended more emotionally by non-scientists than by scientists.

What the Enlightenment did was to see history as the continuously unfolding tale of human life on earth, backed, of course, by the much greater time-scale of the evolutionary development of the universe. This view presents human life as a process in time, which we can elucidate to some extent as we look back or speculate about as we look forward, but which has no definable relationship to anything that might exist outside time, *i.e.*, to eternity or God. Indeed, eternity becomes increasingly unthinkable; there is only the ribbon-like process of time which is secular in the full sense, *in saecula saeculorum*. This is what is meant by "the death of God," and this is why those theologians like the Bishop of Woolwich, who are disturbed by the scientific view of the universe and cannot keep their religious beliefs and their vision of the material world in separate compartments, are trying to evolve what is called "a theology of the death of God." The death of God means not only that there is no personal entity behind the universe to provide us with a moral law, but also that human life can only be given a meaning, if it has any, within the flux of history. And, if I may be allowed my largest generalisation, I would say that the increasing prevalence of *avant-garde* attitudes is a growing effect of this feeling that we live only in time and have to find our values in time. (I say "feeling" deliberately, because in many cases it is not a clear philosophical awareness and it doesn't need to be to produce the effects we see around us.)

Avant-garde artists and thinkers sense the problem of finding values in flux and they are trying—often perhaps neurotically—to espouse what they think is the movement of history by anticipating the crest of the next wave (*la nouvelle vague*), or alternatively they may be trying to escape from the dilemma of perpetual movement by finding some substitute for eternity, *i.e.*, some God-substitute. Quite often, I think, they are trying to do both things at once, and this is why so many *avant-gardes* have both a progressive and a non-progressive aspect. In so far as they are non-progressive, the metaphorical expression, *avant-garde*, is a misnomer, because the movement is not forward, but to the side, or even backwards in time to pre-Enlightenment attitudes. It occasionally happens, for instance, that the *avant-garde* artist is consciously reconverted to Christianity, and usually to old-fashioned Catholicism, because it offers the best escape from flux.

I might add here, incidentally, that the *avant-garde* syndrome is much less noticeable in scientists than it is in artists and intellectuals. Although it is ultimately a result of science, it doesn't seem to affect the scientist *qua* scientist. I suppose this is because, in his work, he is in the happy position of not being concerned with human emotional values at all, and can take an optimistic view of time. He carries the past with him in the form of agreed, accumulated knowledge, and he can look forward to the future as a continuously deeper or more extensive reading of the book of nature on the level of verifiable fact. Scientific truth is, in itself, an escape from time, because it is cumu-

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lative, and because the effectiveness of any part of it can be demonstrated at any moment. But the artist and the thinker are concerned with works of art and intellectual theories, about which there is by no means the same degree of cumulative agreement, and they cannot collaborate with each other in the production of an impersonal truth in the way that scientists can. When George Bernard Shaw said that he stood on the shoulders of Shakespeare, he was deluding himself with a false analogy between science and art. Lavoisier stood on the shoulders of Joseph Priestley and Einstein on those of Newton, but artists and thinkers cannot build a progressive monument in this way.[2] They are almost totally involved in flux, and their situation has become steadily more critical in this respect since the 18th century.

The Death of God & Man

BEFORE THE ENLIGHTENMENT, that is in the days of Old Western Man, whether pagan or Christian, the work of art could be looked upon as a monument embodying permanent truths and existing in a sort of eternity, outside the life-span of the individual artist who had created it. *Exegi momentum aere perennius*. Fashions might change, but they did so unconsciously, and it was tacitly assumed, by cultures which did not look at themselves historically and scientifically, that their views about moral truth and aesthetic beauty were constants. Then, during the first phase of the Enlightenment (which continued well into the 19th century), there could be, and there was, considerable optimism about the possibility of arriving at the permanent truth of human nature, and it was thought that art might be used as an instrument in this search.

The French *philosophes* had looked back over history, had seen it as a record of success or failure (but mostly failure), and had assumed that, by taking thought, they would evolve a concept of man that would allow them, or their successors, to correct the course of history. If history was such a record of crime and injustice, this was because it had not been conducted in accordance with the true nature of man. Once man had been defined as a natural phenomenon like other phenomena, without all the mythical accretions of the past, society would right itself, and the generations of the future would find themselves in a social context that would allow the full and harmonious expression of their inherent posibilities. Actually, this theory takes two rather contradictory forms, which are still very much with us today.

Rousseau popularised the view, although he did not wholly believe in it himself, that the true state of human nature had existed at some time in the past, that man had strayed from it by misadventure, and that the problem was how to return to it. In this hypothesis, movement towards the future involves peeling away layers of supposed civilisation, in order to get back to the purity of man's original being. I suspect that this is not a modern idea at all but an adaptation of the Jewish myth of the Garden of Eden and the classical Myth of the Golden Age, both of which have been present all through Western history in the pastoral tradition. It is an idea we all subscribe to more or less, even though some of us may limit our return to nature to eating whole-meal bread and taking brisk walks over Hampstead Heath. However, although a very tempting idea, it is an impossible one to handle coherently, since there is absolutely no means of deciding what should, or should not, be included in original human nature. Yet, at any given moment, someone is always asserting the supposed "natural" quality of a particular human feature or condemning some other feature as "unnatural," and the tendency is by and large anti-cultural, because if man ever had an original nature, it was presumably an animal one, and culture is something that has been added to it, or has grown out of it. We thus arrive at a paradoxical situation in which culture itself, which is trying to return to a supposed human nature, becomes anti-cultural.

NOW IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY TRUE that, in a sense, long hair is more natural than short hair and a certain degree of grubbiness more natural than cleanliness. It is also an interesting and

[2] I am leaving out of account, for the moment, the fact that there is such a thing as the evolution of artistic forms. Racine, for instance, did not invent French neo-classical tragedy from scratch. He had predecessors whose example helped him. But his success did not in any way help the writers of tragedy who came after him. For a hundred years they tried in vain to imitate him or to do something rather different in the same form, and their works are a graveyard of wasted effort. In other words, literary masterpieces are not elements in a continuous construction, as any great scientific invention is, but they may be end-products in a limited series.

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instructive exercise to move back from culture into the animal world and to consider man as a naked ape. But is it a fact that animality is always truer than culture, as far as human beings are concerned? I don't think so, but ever since the Marquis de Sade, certain individuals have tended to assume that it is, and quite a lot of them have belonged to various *avant-gardes*. Egoistic self-assertiveness may be thought more natural than collective altruism, instinct and impulse more natural than reason, accident and randomness more natural than deliberate arrangement, inarticulate noises more natural than speech, and the body more natural than the mind. It is not uncommon to come across modern artists who are convinced that the less they know and the more empty they can make their minds, the nearer they are to the unsullied purity of human nature.

I once heard Dylan Thomas say, for instance: "The bigger the fool, the better the poet." This could be a way of asserting that the functioning of the poet's imagination should not be hampered by his intelligence, which is true. But this, and similar statements, can also be taken as justification for the belief that the way to get the creative imagination working is deliberately to blunt the intelligence, and the intelligence may be blunted without the creative imagination ever really beginning to operate—with a consequent drift into randomness and irrationalism. And once randomness and irrationalism have been accepted as principles, anything goes; naturalness and unnaturalness can be combined in any mixture. Thus, a belief in the naturalness of long hair can be combined with a fashion for wearing wigs, or one can organise a happening at which one deliberately takes off one's clothes in order to be spontaneously natural. In England at this very moment, curiously enough, in the matter of dress, three quite distinct degrees between naturalness and unnaturalness are almost equally fashionable—total nudity, deliberate unkempness, and exquisite dandyism. And all three are found more or less in the same *avant-garde*, or in over-lapping *avant-gardes*. I am not complaining about this; such complexities have their charms, as well as their occasional disadvantages. I am merely trying to emphasise the uncertainties introduced by the idea of original human nature. One can never tell whether the next wave of the *avant-garde* is going to insist on naturalness or unnaturalness. Baudelaire, in his day, wrote beautiful poetry about the ideal original human nature, at the same time as he declared that nature was hateful, and that women were particularly abominable because they were particularly natural. Huysmans, who was also a major *avant-garde* figure in his time, began by being a naturalist and then produced his famous book, *A Rebours* (1884), which is a systematic denunciation of nature in favour of artificiality. It is a rare case of an *avant-garde* book with a retrogressive title, directed against nature.

However, I think the more serious version of the evolutionary theory assumes that human nature has never existed in any perfect form in the past, but will do so at some point in the future. This, it may be thought, is just an adaptation of another myth, the myth of the Millennium, and indeed the ideal society foreseen by some of the 18th-century thinkers has been dubbed the Heavenly City of the Philosophers. Still, the myth of the social millennium is a noble myth; since it is genuinely progressive, it fits in to some extent with the scientific world view; it has induced a great many artists to put their shoulders to the wheel of social progress, and it has sometimes even enabled them to produce good art. At the same time, of course, it has had deplorable effects both in art and in life. It has often caused the present to be demolished for the hypothetical good of the future, and, in France particularly, it has led generations of artists to assume that, since the ideal society lies in the future, they must maintain an attitude of unrelenting hostility to the existing state of affairs.

Needless to say, there are always very good reasons for criticising the present, especially if society is as firmly entrenched in certain philistine attitudes as the bulk of French society was in the 19th and early 20th centuries. I am not asserting that the attitude of extreme negativism which begins, let us say, with Baudelaire and continues through Rimbaud, Alfred Jarry, the Surrealists, Artaud, Sartre, and others, is unmotivated; far from it. But the forward-looking self-righteousness of the *poète maudit*, who is alienated from his average contemporaries, and will only be appreciated by posterity, has become just as much a cliché as the conventions against which he is supposed to be revolting. It has long been axiomatic in France that the artist has to be a rebel, an outcast, a demolisher of old forms, a hater of the bourgeoisie, an exceptional in-

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dividual who lives according to his private anticipation of the laws of the perfect society of the future, not according to the *defective* rules of existing society. In practice, he can rarely achieve this standard completely, and he may not achieve it at all, so that in fact he is often not really a *poète maudit* but that very common French type, the anti-bourgeois bourgeois, who accepts society more or less as it is, while at the same time entertaining a set of intellectual and aesthetic notions which are contradicted by his actual behaviour. I get the impression that a comparable type is becoming increasingly common in England and America and often provides both the artist and the public for certain kinds of *avant-garde* art. The novelty of the situation is not in the contradiction itself; in the old days there was a permanent contradiction between behaviour and Christian doctrine. The new feature is that religious values have been replaced by emotional and intellectual assumptions, often unanalysed, about the relationship between the present and the future. The contradiction was clearly illustrated two years ago by the success of the play *Les Paravents* by Jean Genet, a powerful and nihilistic denunciation of society, which was brilliantly staged by the National Theatre. This was an almost perfect example of a society applauding its own negation.

I NOW COME TO WHAT I think is the crux of the matter. The fundamental development that has taken place in recent times is that the Enlightenment's hope of achieving a definition of human nature has come to seem more and more illusory, at least to a number of important thinkers and artists. When the *philosophes* assumed that it would be possible to define the nature of man and create the perfect society, they imagined they were looking towards the future, but in fact they were falling back on to a static conception. The accumulation of knowledge has shown not only that man is part of the evolutionary process, but that, being an animal with culture, he is an exceptionally mobile part. It is possible to talk about the nature of the non-cultural animals, such as the lion or the tiger, because it hasn't altered appreciably in the course of recorded history. But the more we learn about man, the more we realise that his so-called nature has included such a bewildering variety of customs, attitudes, beliefs, and artistic products that it is impossible for any one person to comprehend more than a very small part of the possible range. Moreover, we are more aware than ever before of the complex and mysterious forces at work within ourselves, and which we do not wholly understand. Consequently, it would take a very confident man today to echo the line from Terence which was a slogan of 19th-century humanism: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.*

In other words, as some modern thinkers—particularly French ones—like to put it, the death of God is now being followed by the death of Man. However much some people may wish to reject the past, precisely because they find it so difficult to contemplate, the knowledge of it weighs upon them as an immense repository of largely unassimilable data, while the future stretches ahead as a vista of endless and ultimately meaningless change. The sheer fact of living in time becomes then an existential anguish, because history is no more than a succession of moments, all in a way equally valid or invalid, and human nature ceases to be a unifying concept and is no more than the name we give to the successive appearances of man.

And, of course, this anguish of living in time is accompanied by the twin anguish of contingency, which is the sensation of scientific law running through animate and inanimate nature, without any intelligible reference to the human consciousness and emotions. Hence a metaphysical dizziness or a nihilistic despair about the very concept of human nature which can combine in all sorts of complicated ways both with the pastoral myth of original human nature and the millennial myth of future human nature.[3]

LET ME INDICATE very briefly some of the consequences of this in *avant-garde* art.

It is because man has been trying, since the Enlightenment, to understand things rationally and scientifically that he has arrived at these dilemmas. Hence a widespread disgust, often a fascinated disgust, with the idea of science and

[3] A student has pointed out to me that what I call the pastoral myth and the millennial myth may be just the old opposition between Platonism and Aristotelianism: the belief in the pre-existing ideal *versus* the belief in development from the embryonic to the ideal. If these are two basic modes of functioning of the human mind, the fact that neither can be fully accepted nowadays would in itself be enough to cause intellectual panic.

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a further justification for the flight from reason. Hence also a search for methods of producing a sensation of mystic depth, in other words, an apparently meaningful, although incomprehensible, relationship with something beyond average existence, *i.e.*, the transcendent. The use of alcohol and other drugs for this purpose has been widely publicised recently, but it has been a commonplace since Baudelaire invented the expression "artificial paradises." It is also paradoxical, because it is a scientific method, although a crudely applied one, of blurring the scientific vision. It has occasionally helped—but always, I think, accidentally—in the production of imaginative masterpieces, such as *Kubla Khan,* but it is also responsible, I suspect, for a vast output of so-called works, which are really examples of psychological randomness, and must be incomprehensible to the authors themselves, once they have emerged from their drugged state, and to other pople, whether *in* or *out* of the drugged state.

Even without drugs, randomness may be turned into a sensation of mystery. If nothing can be given a meaning in the general flux, everything can be given a sort of mystic weight, through being contemplated in a state of Existentialist awareness, which may range from hysterical euphoria to nausea. In its extreme form, this awareness even eliminates the need to create a work of art. Anyone can be his own artist, simply by picking up a stone or a found object or drawing a line around some fragment of the given world and seeing it as an embodiment of mystery. This helps to explain *collages,* cut-outs, and the ramifications of the Cult of the Object amongst Surrealists, Existentialists, and other *avant-garde littérateurs.* Two or three years ago, I had the experience, in an art gallery, of finding a heap of sand on the floor and having to ask the proprietor whether it had been left behind by the builders or was meant as an exhibit. In this particular case, it was an exhibit. Obviously, a heap of sand, however beautiful and mystic, is not meant as a permanent work of art. It cannot be picked up and carried away in its heap-form. It is simply a momentary object of attention that can be replaced by others. Therefore this attempt to see eternity in a heap of sand links up with the sense of cultural and social mobility which led Sartre to liken books to bananas. The two attitudes come together to make works of art part of the flux in which we live, instead of would-be permanent monuments. Hence the development of what is sometimes called 'throw-away art": the work of art is like a flower that wilts after a day, or a culinary masterpiece that is eaten, or a dress that goes out of fashion after a week or so. It has constantly to be replaced by something new, although the new may be a haphazard revival of the old. The latest evening dress may be grandmama's petticoat that has been rediscovered in an attic, or a uniform from the Boer War. In this case, it is also, of course, by its very nature an ironical—but perhaps unconscious—comment on the fact that we exist only in terms of ephemeral fashions.

The Meaning of Meaninglessness

RANDOMNESS is also connected with the dream on the one hand and, when it becomes frantic, with madness on the other. Both are forms of unreason that have been much cultivated by different *avant-gardes.* The interesting point here, I think, is that while medicine and psychiatry, which are scientific in intention, try to interpret dreams and madness in rational terms, some *avant-gardes* have reverted to the mediaeval attitude and accept the dream or the madman's perception as a truth that is higher than the truth of the waking mind or of sanity. This is particularly noticeable among the Surrealists and their descendants, who have taken Rimbaud's prescription about *le dérèglement de tous les sens* very seriously, and who use Freud as an excuse for an irrationalism that Freud himself would not have approved of. It seems to me that they often confuse unreason with the imaginative faculty, both in their doctrines and their works. I agree that reason is not enough. Reason cannot invent. Invention is a leap into the future which depends on imagination or intuition, whatever we may mean by these words, and reason can do no more than test the results of invention. But I remain convinced that all genuine works are connected ultimately with the rational faculty, and indeed feed the reason and help it towards truths that it can eventually define in its own terms. Many *avant-garde* productions, I suspect, are altogether beyond the reach of reason, and therefore lie in an area of random meaninglessness.[4]

But here again all sorts of contradictions

[4] Another student has objected that the concept of the random makes no sense. All impulses must be determined; therefore, whatever the artist produces corresponds to something in his psyche, and

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occur. For instance, the *avant-garde* playwright, Eugène Ionesco, professes a conscious belief in the dream and randomness, yet his plays are for the most part examples of imaginative order that can be discussed rationally, *i.e.*, his practice is, in my view, much superior to his theory.

SINCE LANGUAGE is normally the vehicle of articulate meaning, it is in connection with language that the problem of meaning versus meaninglessness occurs most acutely among *avant-garde* writers, but in a form that I, for my part, find rather surprising. I would have thought that anyone wishing to appease his thirst for mystery has only to contemplate language as we use it every day. Since no genius has arisen to explain to us how language works, there is a sense in which even reasonable statements are extremely obscure and can give rise to mystic wonder; at least they do so in me. If I had to establish a hierarchy of mystery, I would say that imagination is more mysterious than reason, but reason much more mysterious than unreason. However, many *avant-garde* writers do not see linguistic phenomena in this light. For some, all the ordinary uses of language are too comprehensible, and so they adopt various methods of breaking through language, as it were, to a mystery which is supposed to lie beyond it, or of putting words together in a fashion which is meant to provide an escape from flux, yet without being an expression of any permanent human nature, as the classical work was supposed to be.

At one end of the scale are those poets who dispense with the existing languages altogether and replace them by collocations of more or less onomatopoeic sounds. These sounds are perhaps intended as a return to the voice of man's original pastoral nature, like the barking of dogs or the mooing of cows, or perhaps they are supposed to make us feel that all language is futile, since no language provides the key to the meaning of the evolving universe. Then come those poets who treat words as objects, like the objects of the *avant-garde* painter or sculptor, and try to dissociate them from the articulate meanings they might have in a sentence. Of course, poets have always been aware of words as objects with a shape, a rhythm and a feel in the mouth, but traditional poets combined this sense of words as tangible entities with the elaboration of more or less coherent statements. Coherence is now such a despised characteristic that many writers try to eliminate it, as the so-called literary element has been removed from painting and sculpture. The poem is meant to be a sheer juxtaposition of words which doesn't allow the mind to pass through it in the usual way and so slip back into the flux of time. The normal comprehension of any sentence is, necessarily, an act in time, so that if you can halt comprehension, the words become, or may appear to become, ultimate fragments of the universe, producing a semblance of eternity. Hence the modern American saying: "A poem does not mean, it just is." Hence also the title of Susan Sontag's recent book of essays on various *avant-garde* phenomena: *Against Interpretation*, although it is again paradoxical to write interpretative essays to show that genuine modern art is impervious to interpretation.

However, I think there is a profound truth embodied in this kind of remark, and the attitude behind it has produced both good and bad poetry. It helps to account, for instance, for the qualities and defects of two very important French poets, Mallarmé and Valéry, who were *avant-garde* in their day, and of one minor contemporary *avant-garde* poet, Francis Ponge. In all three poets, the deliberately opaque use

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it is presumptuous to judge this something in the name of "reason," which may be no more than a system of bourgeois conventions dating from the 18th or 19th centuries.

I agree that "random" is to some extent a metaphor; I am not using it in the sense of "totally undetermined." I mean that the phenomenon is momentary and has not been satisfactorily fitted into any overall pattern by the artist himself. Nor am I defending a static concept of reason. "Bourgeois reason" is just as unsatisfactory a cliché as any other, since reason is a continuous process of digestion and ordering of data (*cf.* Lalande, *La raison et les normes*).

The problem in artistic production and criticism is:

(*a*) that the artist himself can never be absolutely sure that he has succeeded in creating a valid imaginative pattern. Past examples show that he is not necessarily an impeccable judge of his own work;

(*b*) that the critic can never be absolutely sure of the rightness or wrongness of his reactions. Again, past examples show that he is sometimes right, sometimes wrong.

There is no way of avoiding the perpetual debate between the artist and himself, the critic and the work, and the critic and himself. "Culture" is surely bound to be this endless dialogue between imagination and reason.

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of language can take the form of preciosity, which has been very prevalent in recent years in various departments of French literary and intellectual life. Preciosity may be a valid and brilliant means of extending the possibilities of language, but it can also be a facile and ostrich-like way of arriving at gratuitous mystery, especially in discursive thought. If a critical comment on a hermetic poem is as hermetic as the poem, how does one know that one is not dealing with a poem and a pseudo-poem, or perhaps even with two pseudo-poems?

FINALLY, and connected with what I have just been saying, there is the use of language to create a puzzle, a conundrum, or a game. This is not quite the same thing as a sheer object, since it allows a kind of circular movement of comprehension within the terms of reference of the game itself. When the chief exponent of the *Nouveau Roman*, Alain Robbe-Grillet, declares that a writer is someone who has nothing to say, I think he means that life is non-significant and that we know very little about human psychology. Therefore the writer produces a construct, put together according to his own abitrary rules, or to rules founded on the unexplained realities of his particular temperament, and we are intended to enjoy it as a sort of metaphysical *trompe-l'oeil*. It has an appearance of meaning, since the language of which it is composed conveys sense up to a point, but it is really a self-sufficient linguistic labyrinth, from which the mind is not intended to escape. It offers no exit on to any reality other than itself. In short, in my opinion, it is often no more than an ingenious, sterile, solipsistic fruit on the tree of literature. Its over-deliberate arrangement is, in the last resort, equivalent to the randomness of some other *avant-garde* works. One can see why certain writers have felt compelled to move in this direction, without being convinced that they have found the best solution to their problem.

If All Time Is Equal

I HAVE BEEN ABLE to indicate only a few of the ramifications of this vast subject, but I must now conclude. If this were an *avant-garde* lecture, and not a lecture on the *avant-garde*, I could end by mooing like a cow, or letting off fireworks or uttering *Ubu*-like expletives to emphasise the meaningless of the evolving universe. But I cannot quite bring myself to do this, and so I must assume that I am still not altogether convinced by the more extreme forms of the *avant-garde*, as I understand them. I am not saying that these forms of the *avant-garde* should not exist. I am strongly in favour of everybody producing whatever kind of art they can, as long as we are all free to say what we think about it. But, granted that the intellectual dilemma underlying many *avant-garde* manifestations is genuine and even tragic, I have doubts about the consequences that are sometimes made to flow from it.

I think that dramatic phrases such as "the death of God" and "the death of Man" can breed a great many misconceptions. If God is dead, for instance, this is not a new tragedy. The phrase must mean that God never existed, that he was always an anthropomorphic projection on to the backcloth of the universe and that man never had any relationship with eternity. It follows that the Book of Job or Lucretius may be making much the same point as the atheistic New Novel, only more forcefully, and this may be a cheering thought rather than a depressing one. It is surprising how many old literary bananas still have a lot of flavour. Thirty years ago, M. Sartre himself produced a notable banana, entitled *La Nausée*, which is still remarkably fresh. Similarly, although we cannot embrace all the manifestations of man, I don't see why we should therefore proclaim a humanism of the death of man. Even though we live in the flux of history and have no fixed and clear basis for our moral and aesthetic assumptions, I still cannot feel that they are arbitrary, and if they are not arbitrary, they have to be treated as mysteries, which we can go on trying to understand. Perhaps they correspond to something that might be called an evolving human nature, and that we might accept as a sort of open-ended working hypothesis.

And if all time is equal, there is no more need to rush impetuously into the future than there is to cling stupidly to the past; in any case we can only live in the present by borrowing from the past; we *are* the past which is living in the present. Indeed, the evolutionary view makes partisan attachment to any one segment of time rather vulgar. In short, although the universe may appear to be meaningless, I don't see why we should try to imitate this apparent meaninglessness in art or in thought, or try to palliate it by methods which fail to satisfy all our faculties.

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V. S. Pritchett

Our Oldest Friend

"LOOK OUT!" someone said. "Here comes Saxon."

It was too late. Moving off the dance floor and pausing at the door with the blatant long sight of the stalker, Saxon saw us all in our quiet corner of the lounge and came over. He stopped and stood with his hands on his hips and his legs apart, like a goalkeeper. Then he came forward.

"Ah! This *is* nice!" he crowed, in the cockerel voice that took us back to the Oxford years. He pulled up a chair and placed it so that none of us could easily get out. It passed through our heads that we had seen that dinner jacket before. He must have had it since the last term at school. It was short, eager and juvenile in the sleeves and now his chest had bolstered it, he seemed to be bursting with buns and toffee. A piece of stiff fair hair stuck up boyishly at the back. He crossed his short legs and squeezed them with satisfaction as his sharp blue eyes looked around our circle over his strong glasses.

"How awfully nice." For niceness was everything for him. "Everyone is here," he said, and nodded back to the people on the dance floor. "Jane Fawcett, Sanderson-Brown, Tony Jameson and Eileen—I just missed them in Brussels, they'd just left for Munich—very nice catching them here. With the Williamsons!"

He ran off a list of names, looking over one lens of the glasses that were not quite straight on his young enthusiastic nose as he spoke them, and marking each name with a sly look of private knowledge. We were the accused—accused not so much of leaving him out of things, as of thinking, by so doing, that he *was* out of them. His short, trotting legs were infallible in old acquaintance. Names from the past, names that we had forgotten from school and then Oxford came out, and made our wives look across at us at first with bewilderment and then set them to whispering and giggling.

"What are you doing, Saxon?" someone said. "Are you still on the Commission?"

"In principle yes, in practice," said Saxon, uttering his favourite words, "I'm the liaison between Ways and Means and the Working Party."

"The liaison!" one of the wives said.

"Yes. It's awfully nice. It works very well. We have to keep in touch with the sub-committees. I saw the Dustman the other day. He's a Trustee now, he came in from Arbitration."

"The Dustman?" Mrs. Selby said to her husband.

"Oxford," whispered Selby. "Lattersmith. Economist. Very old. He was called the Dustman because he was very dirty."

"Tessa's father," Saxon said. And as he shot the name of Tessa at us, he grinned at each of us in turn to see what could be found in our faces. There are things in the past that become geological. Selby's face became as red as Aberdeen marble; some of us turned to sandstone; one or two to millstone grit or granite: that was how alarm and disclaimer took us.

"Your oldest friend," said Mrs. Selby to her husband, grinding out the phrase.

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"In principle yes, in practice, no," said Selby bitterly, mocking Saxon's well-known phrase.

"*My* oldest friend, if you please," said Thomas, always a rescuer.

"And mine!" two of us said together, backing him up.

"Is she yours?" said kind Jenny Fox to me.

"She is the 'oldest friend' of all of us."

WE LAUGHED TOGETHER loudly, but not in unity of tone. Hargreaves was too loud, Fox was frivolous, Selby was frightened and two or three laughs were groans. There was something haphazard, hollow, insincere and unlasting about our laughter, but Day saved us by saying in his deep grave voice to Saxon:

"We ought to settle this. Who *is* Tessa's oldest friend? When did *you* meet Tessa, Saxon?"

"Selby and I were at school with her, at Asaph's."

"You didn't tell me that," said Selby's wife to her husband.

"I tried to get her to come tonight," said Saxon. "She's gone out with the Dustman. He said they might drop in later."

Our wives put on stiff faces: one or two picked up their handbags and looked at the door on to the dance floor, as if they were going to search it, and even the building. The incident was one of Saxon's unanswerable successes but once more Thomas saved us. He said to Saxon:

"So *you're* her oldest friend."

And Selby said grimly: "Yes, you were at Asaph's a year before me."

"Saxon! You've been holding out on us," we said with false jollity.

One of the ladies nodded at us, and said to her neighbour: "They seem to be a club."

The pious pretence on the part of our wives that they did not know Tessa Lattersmith was, in its way, brilliant in our embarrassed state. It brought out the hypocrisy in Harry James who said in a light-headed way:

"She's married now, I suppose?"

"Oh no," said Saxon. "She's carrying on." And he meant carrying on, as it were, in the sense of working hard on the joint committee, himself informed because he was, after all, the liaison.

"You mean," said Mrs. Selby, "she hasn't found anyone's husband willing?"

"Shame!" said Saxon, as at an annual general meeting. "Shame!"

"Perhaps," said the kind young Jenny Fox, "she doesn't want to be married."

"She's very rich," said James.

"Very attractive," said Day.

"Big gobbling eyes."

"Lovely voice."

"I don't agree," said Fox. "It bodes. It comes creeping into you. It gets under your shirt. It seems to come up from the floor. Expensive clothes, though."

"Not like the Dustman's!" shouted Thomas, rescuing us again. "D'you remember? I used to see him at the station waiting for the Oxford train. He used to walk up to the very last bench on the platform, and flop down. I thought he was a tramp kipping down for the night, the first time. His clothes were creased as though he'd slept in them. He had that old suitcase, made of cardboard I should say, tied with string—and parcels of books tied up. Like Herbert Spencer. You know Herbert Spencer had to have everything tied to him? He sat there looking wretched and worn out, with his mouth open and his thick hair looked full of dust —a real layabout from the British Museum. He hardly got his feet off the ground when he walked, but sort of trudged, as if he was wading through sand. He must be well past 70."

"No, he's barely 60. Tessa's only 32."

"Thirty-seven," said Mrs Selby.

"He's 62," said Saxon. "Tessa is a year younger than me."

"The Lattersmiths were rich," said James again. "I mean compared with the rest of us."

"The Dustman's wife had the money," said Thomas. "She belonged to one of those big shipping families. Did you ever see her?

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She's like Tessa—oh, she comes after you with those big solemn eyes."

"We went to see her, didn't we?" Day said to his wife. "She saw Diana's necklace, her eyes were fixed on it. . . ."

"*And* my rings!"

"She just wanted them. Greedy. She couldn't bear it that Diana had something that she hadn't got."

"She wanted you as well," said Diana.

"Oh," said Tom, the rescuer. "There's nothing in that. Old Ma Dustman wanted me too, in fact she wanted all of us. 'I am so worried about Tessa, I wish she'd settle down. I wish she'd find a nice husband—now *you*, you're fond of Tessa, I'm sure.'"

"Shame!" called Saxon again.

WE HAD FORGOTTEN about him; he was sweating as he watched us with delight.

"No, it's true," I said to Saxon.

"And she couldn't have them, poor things," one of the wives said and the others joined in laughing at us.

James once more pushed us into trouble.

"Did you ever go on a picnic with them? I mean when they came down to School? No? Saxon, didn't you and Selby? Didn't you? None of your camp fires with damp sticks, thermos bottles and tea slopping over the tomato sandwiches. Oh No! And it never rained: old Ma Dustman had ordered sun down from Fortnum and Masons. They brought the Daimler and the butler came—how did they fit him in, I wonder? I bet he went ahead in the Rolls. He set tables and chairs. Silver teapot, the best Rockingham. . . ."

"Not Rockingham, it can't have been."

"Well, old Spode. Something posh. The butler handed round the stuff. I only just knew Tessa then. I had brought a girl called Sadie and Tessa brought a girl called Adelaide with her and Tessa said, 'I want you to meet Harry James. He's my oldest friend.' Sadie looked sick."

"It had started then?" some of our wives cried out.

"Long before that," I said. "In the cradle."

"Exactly what she said just before we were married when you introduced me," said Mrs. Day to her husband.

"She said it to me at our wedding," said Mrs. Selby and, glaring at her husband, "I don't know *why*."

"I don't get what her fascination for you all was?" said sly Mrs. James.

"Oh," we all said largely in a variety of voices, "I don't know. . . . She was about. . . ."

'You know, I think it was sex," said Jenny Fox.

"Was it sex?" we looked at each other, putting as much impartiality as we could into the enquiry.

"Sex! Of course it was sex," said Mrs. Selby, putting her chin up and gripping her handbag on her knee.

"Not for me," said Harry James.

"Nor me." One wife squeezed her husband's hand.

"Why not?"

This dumbfounded us. We huddled together. Why had none of us made a pass. Were we frightened?

"You took her to picture galleries," said Mrs. Selby.

"Yes," said Selby. "She did nothing but talk about a man called Cézanne."

"That's it. A whole party of us went to Parma and she did nothing but talk of a man called Fabrice," said Tom.

"Fabrice?"

"Stendhal," said Saxon.

"I had Lawrence in Rome."

"There was always another man. Anyone have Picasso? Or Giacometti?" said James.

"Who did you have, Selby? Russell? Einstein?"

Selby had had enough. With the treachery of the desperate, he said: "She talked of nothing but you, James."

"No," said Tom the rescuer. "She can't have had. *I* had you, James."

"I had Tom."

"Day was my trouble."

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"With me it was Bill."

"What a lovely daisy chain," one of the wives said. "The whole distinguished lot of you. Who's missing?"

"Saxon," Jenny Fox said.

WE ALL STARED accusingly at him. Saxon went on squeezing himself. He looked archly over his glasses.

"I had the Dustman," he said complacently.

We laughed but Mrs. Selby silenced us and said to Saxon:

"Go on. You're the only one who's telling the truth."

"She was always very worried about the Dustman," he said. "They're a wretched family. He scarcely ever goes home."

And at this, the band started again and Saxon got up and asked my wife to dance. We were left with Saxon's picture of that rich girl alone in the world. Before the evening was out he had danced with each one of our wives. We all grinned and said, "Look at old Saxon at the end of term dance."

If there was one non-dancer on the floor it was he. His feet, rather like the Dustman's, trudged, in straight, fated lines, deep in sand; enthusiastically deep. He danced, as it were, in committee. Our wives found themselves in the grip of one who pushed them around, all the time looking askance from side to side as if they were sections or sub-sections for which he was trying to find a place in some majority report. They lost their power to dance. The matter had become topographical to them; while he, as he toiled on, was running off the names of people.

"I saw him in Paris on the second day of the conference."

Or

"They were in New York when Foreign Relations met the working party."

Or

"They ran into one another in Piccadilly when the delegation met the Trustees. Thompson, Johnson, Hobson, Timson, Richardson, Wilkinson"—our wives returned to us like new editions of Who's Who.

Except Mrs. Selby. She was much taller than he and on the floor she had the prosecuting look of one who was going to wring what she wanted out of Saxon. She did not look down at him but over his head at the piece of fair hair that stuck up at the back of his head. He soon had to give up his committee style. She got a grip of him, got him into corners, carried him off to the middle, turned savagely near the band and in this spot, she shouted to him:

"What's all this stuff about Tessa and the Dustman?"

And as she said it, seeing him turn to the right, she swung him round to the left and when the dancers were thinning on the floor she planted him in a quiet spot in the middle.

"Tessa's slept with all of you, hasn't she?" she said.

"Shame!" Saxon said, stopping dead. He took off his glasses and there was a sudden change in him. Often since, seeing that naked look on his face, I have thought: "How he must have hated us." I remember at school how we stuffed sausage down his neck and how he just let us do it. Sausage after sausage went down. Then off came the glasses and he backed to an open window. Now, on the dance floor, with his glasses off, Saxon suddenly began to dance—if that is the word for it—as if he had been stung. Where had he learned these extraordinary steps?—that sudden flinging wide of his short legs and arms, that strange buckling and straightening of the body, the thrusting forward and back of his punch-ball head, those sudden wrenchings of Mrs. Selby back and forth, and spinning her round, that general air of looking for a knock-out in the rebound off the ropes. Mrs. Selby's firm eyes were disordered as she tried to foresee his movements, and amid the disorder, she was magnetised by the fiendish rhythm of his feet and by the austere look of his unforgiving face.

"Hasn't she?" called Mrs. Selby, in a last piteous attempt.

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THE BAND STOPPED and she stood there getting her breath in the middle of the floor. Saxon, without music, dropped back into the goalkeeper stance we knew so well, with his hands on his hips and short legs apart. She was staring at Saxon, he was staring at her. It was a long stare. Selby and his partner passed them and he saw what Mrs. Selby saw: obstinate tears were forming in Saxon's naked eyes; water filled them; it dropped on his pink cheeks. He took out his glasses and pretended to wipe them with his handkerchief and put them on. He was sternly, silently, crying. Mrs. Selby put out her hand repentantly; no doubt he did not see her hand but walked with her off the floor. We were clapping in the silly way people do and someone called out:

"Where did you learn that one, Saxon?"

He looked with bewilderment at us.

"I'll be back in a minute," he said, and walked across the room to the outer hall of the hotel.

Mrs. Selby put herself with kind Jenny Fox and whispered to her for a long time and Mrs. Fox said:

"It's not your fault. How could you know?"

"I only *said* it," Mrs. Selby said wretchedly, looking at the swing door that let cold air in from the outer hall when it flashed round and where Saxon had gone.

"What was the matter with Saxon?" Selby accused.

"He's upset—nothing," said Mrs. Fox turning to Selby as she patted Mrs. Selby's hand. And then, arguing for herself, Mrs. Selby told us.

Presently the swing door flashed and Saxon came back and three of us got up to offer him a chair. We gave him the best one, beside a low table which had a brilliant lamp on it. Instantly it threw his shadow on the white wall—a shadow that caricatured his face—the long nose, the chin that receded, the glasses tilted as he looked askance at us, the sprig of school-boy hair.

"They haven't turned up yet," he said.

We looked at our Saxon with awe. It was obvious he was in love with that rich, beautiful woman. He must always have been in love with her. We had pulled her to pieces in front of him. What he must have been feeling as he pretended and as he submitted to our joke. And, after all this, she had not come. Where was she? One or two of us wanted to get up and find her. Where would she be? We could not guess. We had to admit that Tessa merely slummed with us. She would never think of coming to a second-rate hotel like this or to an old Asaphian's reunion. She'd be at some smart dinner party, something very grand—she certainly had "oldest friends" in very grand circles. One could imagine her low neck creeping up close to the conscience of an Archbishop. Or disturbing the shirt of an Ambassador, or her boding voice creeping up the sleeve of a banker who would be saying: "Young lady, what are all your hippie friends up to nowadays?" at one of old Ma Dustman's dinner parties. *She* would be stripping the jewellery off the women and telling Sir Somebody Something that one would be a fool to sell one's Matisses yet. The Dustman would not be there. We tried not to look at the unmarriageable silhouette of Saxon's head on the wall.

"Where did you pick up that wonderful step, Saxon?" Mrs Selby said gaily, to make amends.

Saxon gave a forgiving glance. He had recovered.

"At the Cool It," he said.

"What's the Cool It?" Thomas said.

"A Club," said Saxon.

"Never heard of it."

"In the docks," said Saxon.

"The docks?"

Saxon in the docks! The liaison committees in the docks! Saxon in low life! Saxon a libertine!

"What on earth takes you to the docks? Research? Come clean. Having fun?"

In our repentance, we made a hero of him. The old sly Saxon, pleased and pink, was with us again.

"In principle, yes," said Saxon. "I sometimes go with the Dustman."

We could not speak. Saxon and the Dustman in the docks!

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"What is it—a cellar?"

"It's a sewer," said Saxon complacently. "Tessa goes there with her father."

"The Dustman takes his daughter to a place like that!"

"He says it will loosen her up," said Saxon, looking for hope in our eyes. "You see, he wants her to get married."

Saxon settled back, impudently, comfortably, in the chair. The brocade enriched him and he maliciously considered us one by one.

"To a stoker?" said Selby.

"No," said Saxon. "To me—in principle. That's why I go down there. You see, she's worried about him. We go down to see he doesn't get into trouble. I had to pull him out of a nasty fight last week. We got him out. We got him home. To her place. He hates going to his."

The notion of Saxon fighting was as startling as his dance.

"She must be very grateful to you," we said politely.

"Why do you say 'marry you in principle'?" said Selby.

"He means," Mrs. Selby explained sharply to her husband, disliking the mockery, "the Dustman is her oldest friend, older even than Saxon is. Isn't that so, Saxon?"

"In practice, yes," said Saxon, entirely forgiving her. "I'll go and have another look for them. They promised to come. The Dustman said it would be awfully nice to see us all again. I'll just go and see."

And he got up and trotted across the yards of hotel carpet that had a pattern of enormous roses. It seemed that their petals were caressing him on his way to the door. The door spun round and Saxon vanished.

OUR WIVES SAID: "What a sad story!" and "What a bitch that girl is." But we thought: "Good old Saxon." And "He's suffering for us." Selby put it crudely, saying: "That lets us off the hooks." And then our feelings changed. There was Saxon sitting like a committee on his own feelings, delegating them incurably to sub-committees, and sitting back doing nothing, relying on an amendment. He must have been doing this for the last eight years. But this led us to another feeling. *We* would never have behaved as Saxon behaved. Each of us saw that beautiful girl in our minds and thought we would have soon pulled her out of this ridiculous obsession with the Dustman and his low life. And how often we had heard of coquettes like Tessa settling down at last in their thirties with faithful bores like Saxon, men they had snubbed over and over again before that alarming age caught them out.

We kept our eyes on the main door of the hotel and were so fixed on it that we did not notice, at once, a figure crossing the dance floor at our side and looking in at us.

"Well!" we heard Tessa's slow, only too well-known voice, dwelling raffishly on the word so that it meant "What are you up to? You didn't think you could keep me out of this." Her large solemn eyes, as blatantly short-sighted as Saxon's were, put their warning innuendo to each of us in turn and the mouth of a beautiful Persian cat possessed us one by one. The spell was on us. A comfortable mew to each of our wives indicated that she had known us years before they had.

We were nearly screaming for help. It was for Thomas, the rescuer, to save us.

"Saxon has just gone out looking for your father."

She was up from her chair at once and making for the main door. She had fine legs, a fast passionate step and Mrs. Selby said of her dress:

"It's expensive, but pink is hopeless if you're putting on weight."

But Selby, over-eager for any hope that could be got out of the situation, said:

"Did you see her when she came in? It was exactly like Saxon. Hunting. You know—in principle yes, but in practice—well. She's a liaison too. I think the Dustman's loosened her up and found the man for her."

But no one paid much attention to Selby for the swing doors flashed and across the hall came the Dustman, Saxon and Tessa together.

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"Look, daddy," she said to the old man. He had not, of course, changed into a dinner jacket and his tweed jacket was done up on the wrong button. His trudging step, I thought, was not so much a trudge, as a scraping caused by the probability that he was swinging by an invisible rope hooked to the seat of his learned trousers.

"Look," she said, "all my oldest friends!"

And Saxon stood apart with his hands on his hips, watching, his legs apart, keeping goal, wistful, admiring, triumphant.

"Who's dancing?" piped the old man. And soon all of us were on the floor, the Dustman shoving Mrs. Selby along as if to her doom, and Tessa following him with her eyes all the time, as Saxon leapt into his passionate, dreadful and unavailing antics all round her. Once in a while she would note where he was, open her mouth to say something pleasant, and then coldly change her mind.

Confrontation

When we finally met, the hatred
That for weeks had been savoured
Was drained of taste:
We let it fall.
We looked at each other without fear,
With shyness and curiosity,
No loathing at all.

The impulse to smash bone and tear flesh
Was gone; no aftertaste
Lingered and sickened.
One did not forgive:
Forgiveness and blame were irrelevant
As knuckle-duster, cosh, revolver,
Or slick shiv.

My need was for the affection
I felt for him, and he
I am sure wanted mine.
Courteously we waited,
Uncertain, yet each with the knowledge
That through the bonds of her body
We were related.

I felt a rare generosity,
A kinship and sympathy;
Believed, in us both,
These might uncover
New areas of magnanimity
Dismissing such trivia as who
Was husband and who lover.

Vernon Scannell

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Nigel Dennis

A Desperate Measure

There are 86,400 seconds in every 24 hours;
Each second's tick marks the birth of 100 professors—
Id est, a daily 8,640,000 of 'em—
Emergent from wombs ranging from Chile to Birmingham.
An enormity, you cry? Excellent! You understand me.
Here are my well-argued reasons for believing that from now on
They should be strangled in their cradles, every last one:

In my distinguished decades as reviewer, critic, editor,
I have been obliged to read—and all of them by professors—
8,093 books or full-length studies about Kierkegaard;
9,002 " " " " " Thackeray, Leopardi;
19,001 " " " " " Dante, Goethe, Hardy.
About *Daniel Deronda* and the tireless George Eliot generally,
7,100—which is understating her figure generously. Now, I
Will omit tons of other lumber of a like timber and go on
To cite briefly what I have had to stomach with acidity
Annually, in my long, honourable, dramaturgical capacity:

All the above added together and then some about Shakespeare;
Roughly the same with knobs on about Sophocles, Fletcher, Dekker,
Ibsen, Chekhov, Beckett, Sartre, Beaumont and Flecker,
O'Neill, Aeschylus, Pinter, Wesker—yea, yea, Wesker e'en.
These have fatigued me so disgustingly that there have been:

1,001 nights when I was impotent with women and had
Scarcely the zest to tackle even a small boy;
3,000 evenings when I threw up my hands,
4,000 " " " " " " dinner.
Every one of those writings was done by a professor, except
When it was someone duller—I mean, Simone de Beauvoir:
Not a one of them showed any sign of caution or terror
At the prospect of the Last Judgment, *Dies Irae*, etcetera:
Not a one of them cared whether I plugged on or died,
Not " " " " stopped short of 100,000 words:
Whence my cry to the world for professorial infanticide.

Song

They have nailed me to untenable hypotheses;
They have used rusty six-inch nails from library doors;
They have prodded my sides with interminable longueurs;
They have soaked me with mugfuls of watered vinegar.
Whole days that I might have spent in dancing and farting,
They have obliged me to spend in fury, wincing and smarting.

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Dr. Dawkins—a professor himself, but only at a dirty
University, a sort of seat where you buy your Ph.D. for money
And they put together your *Daniel Deronda* for you—
Dr. Dawkins has suggested that one per million dons should be spared
For reasons solely of historicity. Each faculty, the globe over,
Covering every tangible -osophy and -ology, should endeavour
To submit one professor for sparing, justifying this by arguing
His exemplary tedium, his cuneiform writing, his clay tablets. I
Respect Dawkins' integrity, but I shall not talk turkey:
Mercy is always impractical and never really necessary:
I know, as Herod did, that there is no time like infancy.

Permit me to ask, moreover, just how much mercy
Was ever proffered by a professor to the immortal dead?
Did he not grapple them from the quiet sea-bottom with dull hooks?
" " " dry their juices in the dark, to purvey as egg-powder?
" " " cook their sweetest simplicities into hashes of complexity?
I mention this fact so that you will be entirely reassured
That in demanding an overall death-sentence, I am not just selfish:
I am also mindful of others—of the phosphorescent lustre of corpuses.

"But will not many innocent babies who would never
Have grown up to be professors be strangled by mothers who are
Too impulsive by half, too spontaneous by nature?" Yes,
I grant this: now and then an infant that might have waxed
Into a bonny tax-collector, or a healthy Cuban guerrilla
Brutish enough to win the respect of Radicals the world over,
Will pay with his life for showing accidentally professorial stigma:—

Item: For dragging heavily on the delicious teat;
Item: For filling his diaper with impermeable solids;
Item: For looking, on being chucked, only glazed and stolid;
Item: For gnawing the same plastic ring with one-and-the-same grin;
Item: For eschewing the rich cluck, preferring the dense idiom.
But my breadth of vision allows me to shrug off injustices:
Such innocents will expire for the good of the whole—and not
So very many of them at that: normally you can trust any mother
To tell at a glance which child will be like which father or other.

"I shall not live to see this," I tell my son, "but it
Will come in your time."—"What!" he burbles:
"Not one more scramble through Blake's symbols?
" " " " trample through Boswell's gambols?
" " " " stumble over Howell and Lowell?
" " " " rumble down Marx's *Capital*?
" " " " fumble with Sainte-Beuve's genitals?
" " " " Rimbaud round Verlaine's arsehole?"
"Nary a one," say I: "no worse pedantry shall be heard
Than the plod of the hippo and the fall of his turd."
"Blimey!" says he: "if what you say is really true, Dad,
Being crucified meanwhile won't feel any too bad."

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Clifford Geertz

Myrdal's Mythology

"Modernism" and the Third World

WHETHER OR NOT the decolonisation of Asia and Africa leads in the end to the development of modern economies in those regions, it has already led to an enormous amount of theorising about how such economies might most expeditiously be produced. Most of the New States may not be prospering, but the analysis of why they aren't—and how they might—has become an intellectual growth industry of considerable proportions. The new lease on life which economics wrung from the Great Depression before World War II, the escape from the complacencies of academic debate into the excitements of high policy, has been sustained after it by the problem of third world poverty. It is an ill wind that does not blow economists good.

Yet, for contemporary economists, trained as they are to value hard distinctions and precise relationships, the passage south and east has proved even more of a looking-glass experience than the Keynesian revolution, with its urbane depreciation of popular virtues like thrift, self-reliance, and the long view. For in those hot countries the very world of numbers is awry. Meaningful aggregates are impossible to calculate. Financial magnitudes are severed from physical realities. Statistics are fantasy quantified. Critical variables are beyond practical measurement. *Ceteris paribus* is a poor joke.

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Faced with such a situation there are a number of tacks economists can take. They can hold fast to established practices, often driving them even harder in a kind of defensive reaction. They can try gradualism and attempt to modify those practices in such a way as to increase their relevance without sapping their power. They can throw the whole apparatus overboard and engage in what one of them has called "amateurish cogitations on vast themes." Or they can try genuinely to innovate—to construct novel forms of economic analysis. Like any group of intellectuals in crisis, they have—different groups of them—tried out all these available strategies, or, in some cases, scuttled uncertainly back and forth among them. In the West, the debate over the methodological foundations of economics flickers only around the edges of a massive enterprise in what Professor Thomas Kuhn would call "normal science." In the New States, where nothing is normal, it comes into the very centre of concern.

PERHAPS BECAUSE IT DEMANDS less mental readjustment, perhaps because it looks so relentlessly scientific, perhaps even because it carries with it a certain suggestion of superior intelligence, the first approach—the direct application of radically formalised theories of economic growth designed for Western conditions—has been the most popular. The heroic age of the incremental capital output ratio, with its assumption of a determinate relation between increases in aggregate investment and in aggregate income, may now be passing; but the amount of time men of large abilities have spent calculating chimerical *S*'s, *Y*'s and *I*'s and attacking those of others will never be known. Nor, even if a certain realism has lately

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appeared concerning the practical value of this sort of numerology in economies where the market system remains stunted, fragmented, and narrowly contained within traditional social bounds, the premise upon which it is built, that it is capital that makes the economic world go round, and therefore increases in capital which make it expand, remains extremely influential. The notion that, at least for underdeveloped countries, capital formation may be more a product of growth than its cause, and that the central driving forces of economic change lie in less mathematically accessible regions is still rather difficult for many economists to accept.

FOR THOSE who have, even if only hesitantly, begun to accept it, the first step towards realism has usually been the recognition that a purely physical definition of capital leaves out of account a rather important element, namely, people. This interesting discovery has led, in turn, to two distinct, but not unrelated lines of inquiry: into the social, and sometimes psychological, sources of entrepreneurship, the factors that encourage or hinder the emergence of a class of economic innovators; and into what has come to be known as "investment in man," that is, capital expenditures on education, health, and the like which, by improving the skills, knowledge, and vitality of a population, increase its capacity to produce and therefore, so it is assumed, its actual productivity.

Both these approaches, the one stemming, of course, from Joseph Schumpeter's fascination with the Napoleons of business, the other in large part from the American faith in the transformative power of popular education, are, in methodological terms, conservative. They are attempts to preserve an aggregate land, labour, and capital model of economic growth, with the capital element as the genuinely dynamic factor within it, by broadening the concept of capital to include "the human factor."

This last turns out, however, to be a rather more awkward variable than such a model, no matter how breezily one talks about "the supply of entrepreneurs" or about increases in agricultural productivity flowing from "a mixture of education, research, insecticides, high yielding seeds, and a few tractors," can effectively handle. With its introduction, the whole world of social life, not (as intended) a few select and easily domesticated parts of it, breaks in upon economic analysis. From talking about "human capital" it's but a short step, especially when that capital turns out not actually to be quantifiable, and not actually to be capital, to talking about such airy entities as beliefs, values, sentiments, and institutions. And when that happens it is not just a few familiar concepts which have to be altered, but the whole direction of economic thought.

The Indian Dilemma

IT IS THIS GAP between a model outworn and one not yet constructed that Gunnar Myrdal attempts to cross in his sprawling, earnest, outspoken, and ultimately unsatisfying new book, *Asian Drama, An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*.[1] Twenty-two hundred and eighty-four pages long—the product actually of several hands, transient apprentices in Professor Myrdal's Stockholm workshop—the book is more assembled than written. There is hardly an image, a metaphor, a witticism, or a turn of phrase from one end of it to the other. What isn't said twice is said three times, and there are some things that are said every five pages. But, for all its leaden clumsiness, it grapples with the problems posed for economic theory by the turn towards the analysis of underdevelopment with a fixity of purpose that exposes not only their magnitude but the feebleness of our efforts thus far to deal with them.

Professor Myrdal pronounces himself an institutionalist, by which he means that he regards the central task of economics—or at least of the economics of development—to be the location, analysis, and modernisation of the social, cultural, and psychological factors which most powerfully affect economic behaviour. What he means by "modernisation" is not quite as clear, but in essence it comes down to the creation of the sort of institutional structure the West would like to think of itself as possessing, or at least very near to possessing.

The contemporary welfare state (and "at lower but rising levels of living, the Communist countries") with its high degree of social and economic equality, its ease of social and spatial mobility, and its thorough-going national integration, with a population marked

[1] London, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 10 gns.; New York, Pantheon Books, $25, paper $10. A paper-back Pelican edition (3 vols. boxed, 75s.) has recently been published by Penguin Books.

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by efficiency, diligence, orderliness, punctuality, frugality, enterprise, honesty, and the rest of the Protestant Ethic virtues, and with a commitment to a scientific world view free from "superstitious beliefs and prejudices," to popular sovereignty, and to the "moral solidarity of all mankind," embodies, or at least projects, the ideal of a humane modernity. A society of this sort stimulates growth, supports high standards of living, enlarges personal freedom, and promotes social, economic, and political justice. The goal of economic analysis should be, therefore, to determine how, for any particular underdeveloped country, or for all of them in general, this sort of society, or some reasonable approximation to it, can be brought into being. That is, it should seek to formulate the national policies which need to be pursued to encourage the appearance of a social order a European mind nourished on the compassionate rationalism of democratic socialism can approve.

India—which Myrdal's book is, despite its title, almost entirely about—is emphatically not now such a country. Worse, on Myrdal's accounting, it is not becoming more estimable, but less. Inequality and exploitation are increasing; the hold of superstition is growing stronger; political dynamism is evaporating as reactionary provincials displace reforming cosmopolitans from the centres of power; deepening local particularism threatens the very integrity of the state; and income per head, though probably not actually declining, is advancing at so slow a pace as to amount to virtual stagnation. What set out with Nehru's accession in 1947 to be a social and economic revolution, turned by his death in 1964 into a resurgence of petty plutocracy, moral cynicism, and mindless traditionalism. As much indictment as analysis, *Asian Drama* depicts a hypocrite India, loudly proclaiming progressive values and weakly surrendering to her own worst impulses.

MYRDAL IS IN SOME DOUBT as to whom most to blame for this unhappy state of affairs: Western economists bemused with their rarefied doctrines, or the members of the indigenous élite who have found in those doctrines an ideal device by which to profess radicalism while practising conservatism. By avoiding any consideration of the constitutional context within which economic policies have to operate, and in fact putting such considerations officially out of court, Western models of growth and concepts of planning make it possible to protect vested interests in the name of economic rationality. "Casteism, communalism, provincialism, and linguism"—which, wrapped in a shroud of cow-worship, is largely what Myrdal regards traditional Indian social structure to consist in —are strengthened. The position of those whose power derives from these senseless anachronisms is enhanced by abstracting from the facts of life which really count in favour of those which are merely countable. In such a way, some of the more advanced aspects of Western civilisation combine with some of the more backward ones of Indian to propel the country not towards modernity but into a kind of no-man's-land between an intractable past and an unreachable future.

In short, the call for "institutionalism" is a moral as much as a scientific one. Indeed, Myrdal denies, as he has throughout his entire career, the very reality of this distinction. A disinterested social science is logically impossible; it has never existed, it never will exist, and claims that it does exist are conscious or unconscious attempts to avoid facing real issues or to conceal ideological biases. By directing attention away from the central drama of development—the clash between the rigid irrationality of traditional society and the creative dynamism of modern—the supposedly value-free models of contemporary economics, capitalist and communist alike, serve the cause of reaction when applied to countries such as India. Institutionalism, by bringing that drama into the focus of analysis and attacking the causes of inertia directly, enlists economics on the side of progress. Someone less inclined to turn scientific disagreements into wars of principle (as well as less totally committed to what has been called the Modernist Dogma: that in any conflict between the past and the present, the present is always right) can only wonder whether this Manichaean view of the way things stand in southern Asia is really accurate and whether, that pedestrian question aside, it can lead to an analysis of change which is more than a long and unhelpful lament.

Land, Labour & Development

GIVEN THREE VOLUMES, seven parts, thirty-three chapters, nine appendices, and 591 sections, Professor Myrdal and his assistants are able to cover a wide range of topics. The

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first part concerns itself with methodological issues, the second with the recent political history of South Asia, the third with the general economic situation in the region *ca.* 1960, the fourth with planning, the fifth with labour utilisation, the sixth with demography, and the seventh with health and education, while the appendices take up a disparate series of topics ranging from the uselessness of accounting prices in planning or the instability of export earnings to the dissimilarity of European and South Asian nationalism or the effect of climate on economic activity. There is very little which has even the remotest possibility of relevance to economic development that is not at least touched on somewhere, and most of the crucial factors are discussed at length. In terms of mere coverage, only the sun-spot theorist has much reason to be disappointed.

In qualitative terms, however, most of the discussions are, especially after such a rousing methodological call to arms, surprisingly conventional—textbook summaries of what anyone with much knowledge of the region will already know and anyone without would be as well advised to get first-hand from the handful of standard and easily accessible sources on which the summaries are based.

The description of recent political history, traced out for Pakistan, Ceylon and South-east Asia as well as India, merely condenses what a few, themselves synthesising works—Spear, Moreas, and Pannikar on India, Callard on Pakistan, Tinker on Burma, Mills on Malaya, Furnivall and Wertheim on Indonesia, and so on—have already said in a more circumstantial and more critical manner. The survey of the general economic situation brings together a quantity of material from ECAFE and other statistical reports in a convenient but not very original way, and Myrdal himself insists that the data are so unreliable that he publishes them only to expose their frailty. The review of population problems is irreproachable for the most part, but about what one finds in any recent analysis of the situation. What little attention is given to "social context" consists of the usual unparticularised references to the supposed effects of religion, the subordination of women, and the extended family on attitudes towards birth control. As for the chapters on education and health, they are mainly compilations of almanac facts plus, in the first case an attack on the excessively literary emphasis in the Indian school system (held to be a result of the ascendancy of Brahmin values in traditional society reinforced by office clerk ones in colonial), and in the second a celebration of the importance of rising standards of health in improving individual capacities for work.

Only in the part on labour utilisation, and to a lesser extent, related sections of the part on planning, is the slogan of "institutionalism" redeemed by trenchant and original, and therefore controversial, analysis. Only there (and in the more systematic reprise of these arguments in some of the appendices) does the rejection of recent economic thought in the West rise above the level of generalised complaint to that of substantial theoretical challenge.

IT IS LOGICAL, at least so long as one remains within a factors-of-production framework, that having rejected the capital-centred approach to development theory favoured, in different ways, by classical, Keynesian, and post-Keynesian economists alike, Myrdal would opt for a labour-centred one. Not only is it "always salutary" in economic affairs "to remind ourselves that 'man is the measure of all things,'" but a view of growth from the perspective of the utilisation of the labour force both "brings us closer to crucial issues than do fiscal plans for public expenditure or calculations of aggregate output" and enables us to "take account of the role of attitudes and institutions, and the potential productivity-raising effects of improved standards of consumption in underdeveloped countries." And, having opted for a labour-centred approach, it is logical that he would find the Achilles' heel of the established approach in its concept of Unemployment. It is on an intensely reasoned and exhaustively developed critique of this almost Euclidean idea in modern economic theory that Myrdal's whole argument for the necessity of "a more realistic" —read, "more sociological"—theory turns.

In fact, unemployment of the sort familiar to the West—men desirous of work of a certain kind but unable to find any, sitting at home and brooding or pacing the streets in fruitless search—is not very prominent in underdeveloped countries. Even in the most obviously depressed situations it is hard to find able-bodied (or even not so able-bodied) men who are not at least apparently engaged in some sort of gainful, if not necessarily very productive occupation.

In response to this potentially embarrassing situation, development economists have merely

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extended the concept of unemployment to include so-called "under-employment," leaving the general structure of economic theory intact. Originally designed by Joan Robinson, under the rubric of "disguised unemployment," to take account of Western workers who in the great depression took jobs at a lower level of skill and productivity than those for which they had been trained—textile workers reduced to ditch-digging, and so on—the notion of Underemployment has become a central ingredient in the economic analysis of underdevelopment. Extended yet further to apply to "redundant labour"—workers, especially in agriculture, who are employed but add little or nothing to output—it has made it possible to continue to regard the process of capital formation as the prime mover of economic growth.

Indeed, it has led to the seemingly paradoxical view that agricultural (and, to some extent, commercial and governmental) underemployment forms a kind of unrecognised capital resource. "Disguised unemployment" turns out to be, at least *in posse*, "disguised savings."

As a large part of the rural labour force, the argument runs, is redundant (Arthur Lewis has estimated that at least a quarter of India's farmers, which would be perhaps some forty million persons, fall into this category), the transfer of large masses of people out of agriculture would, if work opportunities of any significant productiveness were made available to them, amount to an increase in aggregate investment. Agricultural production would not fall (a few enthusiasts have even claimed that it would rise) and, assuming the costs of this transfer and re-employment could be kept down and the consumption of the removed workers maintained around its original level, national income would increase.

For the labour reserve of classical economics, a pool of unemployed men absorbable into expanding industry by energetic entrepreneurs at "economic," that is, low, wage rates, development theorists have substituted that of redundant agricultural labour transferable by similar entrepreneurs or (more likely) by the state, into industry—or capital-creating public works—at similarly "economic" wage rates. In fact, if a technology at once labour-intensive, capital-saving, and modern could somehow be invented, it could turn mass poverty into a powerful engine of development which would, as the process of capital formation thus initiated became self-sustaining, progressively reduce the poverty. What coal and iron were to the West, the workable stuff out of which technique and enterprise fashioned an economic revolution, the superfluous farmer, and perhaps as well the superfluous peddler and the superfluous bureaucrat, could be, given new technique and equivalent enterprise, to the third world.

MYRDAL'S ATTACK ON THIS cheerful doctrine is extended and complex, upending en route virtually all of its central assumptions—that the marginal productivity of agricultural labour in India is zero; that, like unemployment proper, underemployment is "involuntary"; that modern industry can, under some attainable factor-mix, absorb enough people to support a significant reduction in the rural labour force in the foreseeable future. But it boils down essentially to a single point: namely, that a purely quantitative, labour reserve view of "underemployment"—or what, harking back to a simpler idiom, he prefers to call "idleness"—is radically inadequate in India and South Asia because it fails to take account of the social setting in which production takes place.

In particular, it assumes a degree of elasticity in such economies at least roughly comparable to that found in Western ones, and this assumption, given the traditional nature of the institutional structure in which underdeveloped economies are embedded, is a wildly unrealistic idea. To talk glibly about the movement of large masses of workers from one form of employment to other more productive ones in a country in which a rigid caste system binds men by birth to specialised occupations, in which an entrenched Brahminic ethic depreciates the worth of manual labour, in which a half-capitalist, half-feudal tenure system promotes rentier landlordism and share tenancy at the expense of peasant proprietorship, in which irrational religious taboos reduce the participation of women in the work force and extend the lives of withered cows, in which an incomplete commercialisation of the rural economy supports a noxious crowd of small-time usurers, and in which local government consists of a committee of barnyard notables dedicated to seeing that this treasury of "economic debris and social decay" is preserved intact, is escapism or worse.

THE GENERAL CONCLUSION which flows from this conception of the situation is clear-cut: "Fundamentally it is in [the agricultural] sector that

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the battle for long-term economic development will be won or lost."

Industry is not going to be able to absorb a significant proportion of even the increase in the labour force for a long time to come. Indeed, in the initial phases, industrial progress may be expected actually to lower the percentage of the total labour force engaged in manufacture. As for crafts and small-scale factory production, they will have trouble enough merely holding their own against imports and what large-scale industrialisation occurs, and their employment impact will consequently be but marginal at best. In the short run, virtually the whole of the very rapid increase in the labour force (an increase which, as its prospective members are already born, is demographically inevitable) is going to have to be absorbed into agriculture. Not only is no one going to be transferred out of farming, a great many just arrived adults are going to be "transferred" in. As crowded as the rural economy is now—nearly three-quarters of the population derives its livelihood from it—thirty years from now it may seem to have been positively frontier-like.

The implications for policy are, in turn, no less manifest: the main short-run effort must be a massive attempt to raise agricultural productivity. In part, this can come through an expansion of cultivated area, but mainly it must come through raising the per acre yields of land already in cultivation. In this effort, modern methods of farming and animal care have a central role to play, but the fundamental problems are again not so much technical as institutional, less a matter of capital formation than of inducing social reforms which will cause capital formation, as well as a number of other developmental changes, to occur.

Unless the caste system can be undermined, religious sentiment blunted, linguistic provincialism erased, the property system transformed, education made more practical, the sexual division of labour revised, outmoded medical practices suppressed, family size decreased, and the national government rendered impermeable to the designs of local vested interests, the necessary rise in productivity cannot take place. Agriculture will be able to absorb the expanded labour force only at the cost of an accelerating decline in the already abysmal standard of living and the suffocation of the few tentative movements towards modernisation that have somehow managed to appear in the countryside.

But it is at this point that one's accumulating doubts about the whole line of argument can no longer be suppressed: granted that the patient's situation is desperate and quite probably worsening, that Western remedies are ineffectual, and that a kind doctor is no friend, what sort of mad prescription is this? A short-run social change of these dimensions is, even to Myrdal, whose conception of how societies work tends to be rather uncomplicated, scarcely conceivable, and not only under present political arrangements but under radically altered ones as well. Unless something is wrong somewhere in this analysis it would appear that, despite his repeated insistence, growing distinctly more forced as the book proceeds, that there is hope for India if only she will pull herself together, discard irrelevant theories, cease being a "soft state," buckle down to work, and launch the "big push," the country, like the South Asian region as a whole, is on a turnless road to disaster. Myrdal might like to be India's Marx; but he sounds more like her Malthus.

The Limits of "Institutionalism"

Fortunately, there may in fact be something wrong with it. And what sort of thing it might be is suggested by a peculiar characteristic of Myrdal's entire book: namely, that the image of India (and even more of the other countries of South Asia, which are employed here as a kind of *choros* to India's *agon*) is completely stereotypic.

For someone so intent on restoring sociological realism to economic analysis, Myrdal's portrayal of Indian culture and society is astonishingly abstract. Unnuanced and unparticularised, it is a thing of silhouettes and shadows—"caste," "landlordism," "superstitition," "the village," "the masses," "provincialism," "nationalism," "the state"—a civilisation without qualities. It would seem impossible to write nearly a million words on a country with so rich a history, so profound a culture, and so complex a social system and fail to convey the force of its originality and the vitality of its spirit somewhere; but Professor Myrdal has accomplished it. There is no passage to India here, but only to some off-shore elevation from which its bolder features can be dimly and uncertainly seen.

And it is this conception of sociological analysis as consisting of broad discussions of gener-

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alised categories which makes it possible for Myrdal to conclude that Indian tradition amounts to a vast collection of irrational, inert, unresponsive, but nonetheless tenacious obstacles to change. Archaic institutions, like caste, or Hinduism, or share tenancy, may, if enough outside pressure is brought against them by those who have by some miracle freed themselves from their grip, "disappear," "decay," "dissolve," "decline," or "weaken." With sufficient will and ruthlessness on the part of a modernising élite they can be "overcome," "demolished," "worn down," or "overthrown." But the possibility that they are in any way in themselves dynamic, that they can and might evolve, indeed be evolving, and that the processes of such evolution might be worth the sort of close and expert investigation given to, say, demographic or technological changes is apparently not even entertained.

Indeed, on this subject caution departs almost entirely in outbursts of mere indignation. "The writer knows of no instance in present-day South Asia where religion [defined as 'normally irrational . . . superstitious . . . a mystical rather than logical way of thinking'] has induced social change." As for the village, "that stronghold of stagnation," it is in no better shape—"the system of [elected village councils] . . . has not . . . thrown up any new leadership in rural areas," which remain in the grip of a "self-elected boss class" dominating a mass of "torpid" and "submissive" peasants who (quoting Zinkin) "*like* their society static." As for caste, the irrationality that ties all the other irrationalities together, it is "so deeply entrenched in India's society" that, despite all that has happened since Independence, "nothing very much [in respect of it] has changed."

Aside from wondering how Myrdal can be so sure of these things when he regards the by now quite extensive sociological and anthropological literature on South Asia as so bound to an undynamic outlook as to be unworthy of serious review and has not himself spent any significant amount of time in the countryside, there would seem to be some reason on the basis of what we know about social change in general to regard this dead lump view of the Indian aspects of India as more than a little overdrawn. It is, in fact, a crude and delusive caricature.

IF ALL THESE "barriers," "inhibitions," "obstructions," "obstacles" and so on which Myrdal, rightly enough, regards as not exactly driving forces in modernisation are not only a great deal less rigid and inert than he thinks but are themselves well in the course of (admittedly, an externally stimulated) self-transformation, then perhaps it is not necessary after all to tear Indian society limb from limb in the course of a few decades in order to assure her material progress. It is still necessary to do much, most of it painful and a good deal of it radical, for no one would argue that the changes now occurring in India add up to a headlong movement towards modernisation. The struggle against the weight of the past is a real and desperate one in any underdeveloped country, and nowhere more than in India where indeed some very quaint customs persist. But it is a struggle which consists in shaping patterns of change already in motion, not in creating a nation out of nothing. The civilisation that looks to Myrdal to be drifting aimlessly in a sea of anachronisms is actually undergoing the greatest series of changes in its history.

As this is so, the image of an Asian Drama consisting in a struggle for a nation's soul between a masculine principle of rationality, diligence, discipline and facing of facts and a feminine one of irrationality, passivity, indiscipline, and self-delusion is precisely what it sounds like, an Occidental myth. If one looks not distantly and tendentiously, but closely and disinterestedly at the Indian institutional structure, one not only sees that it is not standing still, but that a consideration of the ways in which it seems to be moving yields a rather different view of the development process than arises from seeing it in terms of "the moral allegiances" of the modern European welfare state diffusing eastward. And one of the matters on which such a different view most clearly emerges is the "unemployment" problem.

Of "Work" & "Idleness"

FOR IT IS ANOTHER curious characteristic of Myrdal's book that while he questions the applicability to Indian conditions of almost every received concept of modern economic analysis, he does not question that one which lies at the centre of his own approach: that of a demographically given "labour force." Here, he does not address himself to the obvious "in-

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stitutionalist" issue: does the term "labour force" mean the same thing when applied to India as when applied to Europe? In its received, unsociological form is it not more likely to obscure than to clarify the Indian situation? He merely assumes the usual statistical definition of the concept—all able-bodied men and certain classes of women between, say, fifteen and sixty.

It is realised, in fact stressed, that the "participation ratio," the percentage of this "potential" labour force actually at work, varies notably from the European norm—there are fewer women workers, more café-sitting intellectuals, more small-scale rentiers, an excess of priests and mendicants, and so on. But his response to this fact is to urge an immediate correction towards the Western pattern—increasing the employment of woman, vocationalising education, asphyxiating rentiers, secularising Brahmins; that is, raising the participation ratios of the various idle groups. The possibility that the reverse process, the reduction of the per cent of the total population which is directly employed in manufacture, commerce, and agriculture may be a prerequisite to Indian development, that what is needed is not the suppression of "idleness" and the encouragement of "work" but their redefinition, is not even considered.

If it is true that the image of an India absorbing her exploding "labour force" over the next three or four decades by means of a rapid process of industrialisation along the Western model is a pipe dream, it is also true that the image of her absorbing it into a technically improved agriculture is scarcely less utopian, and for about the same reasons: rapidly rising productivity and rapidly increasing employment are, in the world which really obtains, contradictory aims.

The factor proportions in modern agriculture are indeed more flexible than in modern industry; but the notion that they are so flexible that such agriculture can absorb an enormously increased labour force while sustaining a significant rise in man-hour productivity is a delusion. What will happen under that sort of policy is (at best, and only for a while) a *pari passu* rise in output and employment which will leave everything about where it was in *per capita* terms. A generation hence India will still be getting ready to make its great move towards development with a larger population, an even more rigid agrarian structure and the same or slightly higher, or (if agricultural economists turn out to be as over-optimistic about seeds and fertiliser as they usually are), even a slightly lower standard of living. If the labour-absorbing modern industry strategy provides no way out for a country with India's demographic situation, neither does the labour-absolving modern agriculture strategy. To make a social revolution in its name is to break eggs for a very poor omelette indeed.

THE ASSUMPTION CONCEALED in the concept of a "labour force," that a place must be made in the productive system for everyone physically capable of filling one, is not valid for India and other densely populated countries of the third world. In so far as they make a transition to modernity at all, they will make it with working-age populations far in excess of what modern, capital intensive forms of production —industrial, commercial, and agricultural alike —can cope with. Their "unemployment" problem is not how to put all these tens of millions to work in the mills, shops, and farms. It is how to fit those who cannot be so employed, if such mills, stores and farms are to be maximally productive, into the emerging pattern of a machine society.

THE FRIGHTENING FACT about such countries is that at the same time that their adult populations grow with unprecedented speed the percentage of those populations engaged in what Westerners regard as "productive labour" must drop. This is in fact, as Myrdal, quoting the Thorners, notes (and with his characteristic "labourism," deplores), what is actually occurring. Between 1901 and 1951, when there was essentially no change in the proportion of the population over fifteen (and what sectoral reallocation of the work force that occurred was *in favour* of agriculture), the number of workers per hundred men dropped from about 64 to about 54, per hundred women from 33 to 23. In Madras, where the India of the year 2000 is perhaps already stumbling vaguely into view, the figures have fallen even lower: 46 for men, 14 for women. Perhaps the superstitious, caste-bound, hypocritical Indian peasants know, in their diffuse and inarticulate way, something that Myrdal does not after all:

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namely, that in contemporary Asia employment and productivity can be inversely correlated variables and that if everyone in India who is "eligible to farm" farms, they will all gradually starve.

With this view, that the productive system of a modernising India is going to employ the energies of a very much smaller part of her active population than did that of the modernising West, and that concentrating on improving agriculture (however valuable that may be in itself) is not going to do much to change this fact, puts a number of aspects of contemporary Indian social structure into a rather different light.

IT IS LESS CERTAIN, perhaps, that everyone ought to be vocationally trained, that transfers of agricultural income through rents to non-cultivators should be stamped out, that women ought to be encouraged to get out into the fields, that manual labour should be universally glorified, that traditional religious specialists should be condemned as parasitic, that the "educated unemployed" ought to be put behind ploughs. There are many things deeply wrong with these institutions—with share tenancy, with purdah, with Brahminism, with caste, and with the quality of thought in Indian cafés—and there is no doubt that they must be fundamentally reformed. But such reform must begin with a realisation that far from being simple irrationalities, they and the values embedded in them are responsive to one of the most critical developmental necessities of India: they tend to keep people outside the work force but inside the society.

The problems posed in creating a modern society in which a quite small minority of the population carries out what we tend, reflecting our own outmoded valuations, to call the "real" work of the society are enormous. Who is to be so employed? What are the rest of the people going to do? How is the whole system going to be justified? What sorts of purposes are going to animate it?

THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS and others like them involve a revolution in outlook and a transformation of a pattern of social existence which will be, if it occurs, unlike those which produced modernity in the West, or even in Japan. And it will take a profounder and more resolute "institutionalism" than Professor Myrdal's to discover them. It will take a more circumstantial, less Western centred, and less moralistic analysis of what is really happening in India and what can happen; a sociology which is more than broad generalisations derived from "staple general reasonings" and "the values of the Enlightenment as expressed in the welfare state."

Institutional modernisation in India cannot be simply a matter of "wiping out" archaic customs and unpleasant attitudes. It must be a matter of directing a process of social and cultural change already in motion in the appropriate directions. India may stagnate; it may modernise under conditions ethically unacceptable and physically dangerous to decent men (a possibility Professor Myrdal, whose models of modernity are Sweden and England, not Germany and Japan, never openly confronts); it may evolve an institutional structure which can support both economic growth and humane values. But whichever it does, it will do in terms of an ongoing process which if it is to be controlled must first be understood.

Tomorrow's India will be born out of today's India. This is, indeed, the India of "casteism, communalism, provincialism, and linguism." But it is also the India of the Tamil sage Ramanuja who, when taught a *mantra* guaranteeing salvation but pledged to secrecy on pain of condemnation to hell, immediately climbed the temple tower and shouted the secret for all to hear because he accounted his own damnation a trifling price to pay for bringing salvation to so many people.

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Kweku Folson

An African Tragedy

Kwame Nkrumah & Mr. Bing (Q.C.)

"Old politicians never admit defeat. Geoffrey Bing, ex-M.P. and Nkrumah's Attorney-General, was reluctant last night to accept that the Labour Party executive had killed his parliamentary comeback.... No explanation was vouchsafed, but a majority seems to have felt that his link with Nkrumah would be a liability...."I would be interested," he said, "in having it reconsidered. What is it alleged that I've done? What was wrong with Nkrumah's Ghana?...."

THE GUARDIAN (17 March 1969)

MR. GEOFFREY BING, Q.C., served from 1956 to 1966 as constitutional and political adviser to Kwame Nkrumah and was the Attorney-General of Ghana. Nevertheless, he appears in his autobiographical account of the fateful years[1] to be very anxious to play down his own personal role. He claims that he was no political adviser at all, but only a "technician" (pp. 20–21), and that "throughout I was a civil servant.... The civil servant (in Ghana) was confined within narrow limits. The country was run by Dr. Nkrumah, his Cabinet and the various Party and quasi-Party organisations which shared in the government" (pp. 37, 236).

Yet his own account belies his claim. When he was first appointed Constitutional Adviser he was not to advise on constitution matters at all, but on the Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the corrupt activities of the Cocoa Purchasing Company, a political instrument of the Convention People's Party (p. 171). Discussing the appointment of an Economic Adviser to the first C.P.P. government he slips repeatedly into the use of the first person plural: "the type of experts *we* had in mind"; "... Dr. Thomas Balogh whom *we* wanted to assist in the preparatory work..." (pp. 145–6); similarly, on the preparation for the independence constitution: "within a month of Independence *we* would introduce *our* own constitution" (p. 187). Feeling that his energies were restricted as an Attorney-General reforming the laws of Ghana, he resigned to give greater scope to them, to devote them to education and, in particular, to fashioning top institutions which would be "the forcing ground for a fundamentally different approach to the problems of mankind." Having discussed his plans with Nkrumah, the latter suggested (pp. 333–4) that he should take up one of the Presidential Professorships at the University! When, finally, he resigned as Attorney-General he set up his office in Flagstaff House, where Nkrumah lived and worked, and he dealt with "a wide variety of matters" or "a wide range of subjects" among which were: civil service organisation, methods of preventing corruption, international questions at the United Nations and the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference, negotiations over cocoa, the "World Without the Bomb" Conference and Ghana's education system (pp. 338–9).

A Cagliostro or a technician?

In any event, Mr. Bing is in the company of those happy few who have a simple ideological clue to Nkrumah's Ghana and an even simpler explanation of the Coup that toppled Nkrumah's régime in February 1966. His account of Nkrumah's Ghana from 1950 to 1956 is typical of views held by many simple-minded ideologists.

According to Mr. Bing, Ghana at independence decided to set an example to the world

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[1] *Reap The Whirlwind*, Macgibbon and Kee, 63s.

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by following what he calls "a means of co-existence between the industrialised nations and the poorer states who comprise the great bulk of mankind." Because of this the country, which was economically and strategically of no particular importance, was endowed with great symbolic significance and "every figure who appeared on its stage was magnified and distorted almost beyond recognition." Although "crimes . . . on occasions, occurred"[2] and there were a few local weaknesses, the country was doing very well until the Coup. Great social and economic strides had been made, and the country had "ostentatiously dissociated itself from the world's ideological conflicts." (How anyone who lived in Ghana after 1960 can make, let alone subscribe to, such a statement, defies belief!) Yet Nkrumah's policies were intensely disliked by Western forces and were accordingly criticised and discredited in the Western press.

Partly, according to Bing, this was because "orthodox conservative opinion in the West" wanted to prove that Africans could not govern themselves. They badly needed this proof to provide a moral explanation, even justification, of the slave trade, Western exploitation and colonialism in Africa. Partly, also, the explanation is that what Ghana was doing in those years constituted "a challenge to the Western system powerful enough to compel it to mount a sustained counter-offensive." But Mr. Bing is too enlightened to ascribe this almost unanimous Western hostility to Ghana to any conspiracy.[3] Essentially, according to Mr. Bing, this hostility was due to the fact that every attempt to implement the country's policy ran counter to one or other of those vested interests which inevitably grow up in the train of colonialism and necessarily survive it. It was these hostile forces which finally destroyed Nkrumah's government. As for Nkrumah himself, he knew all the faults of the country and (with the modest help of Mr. Bing) unfailingly prescribed the correct remedies for them. Unfortunately, no one man or institution in the country could match Nkrumah in his wisdom, hard-working habits, integrity and patriotism and, consequently, he was badly let down. Thus, the Civil Service was useless, trapped as it was in its colonial and Oxbridge strait-jacket. The judiciary was useless—what else could it be when it thought that the archaic laws of England constituted the *Visio Beatifica*? The University (of Ghana) was useless because instead of producing technically qualified people to solve the country's problems it produced only people with degrees in Ancient History, English Literature, or the Classics.[4] And the people of Ghana themselves were stupid—why else did they "quite uncritically" accept the results of the referendum of January, 1964, which were rigged by over-enthusiastic District Commissioners, the Civil Service and the Police, despite the democratic purity of Nkrumah and his party machine? All this is not a caricature of Mr. Bing's arguments. Ghanaian critics of Nkrumah's régime have heard such arguments propounded by Western ideological supporters of Nkrumah again and again.

IT HAS ALWAYS PUZZLED me, among many Ghanaian critics of Nkrumah, why apparently well-meaning Western left-wing defenders of Nkrumah's régime have closed their eyes to its appalling misdeeds and even crimes. A careful reading of Mr. Bing's book provides the answer. The ideological supporters of Nkrumah's régime are primarily interested not in Ghana, nor even in Nkrumah, but in Western society. They are, for various reasons, against capitalism and capitalists, against big combines and monopolists, against "bourgeois" trade unions and Universities, against Churches, against the American alliance, NATO, the Common Market, in sum, against "the Establishment" and its policies. It is these prejudices and hatreds which

[2] It is to be noted that Mr. Bing does not give any example in his narrative of such crimes.

[3] However, he claims later and at several points in his narrative that such a conspiracy (or several such conspiracies) in fact existed. After granting African countries independence, the Western world "almost immediately repented and stepped in to prevent them governing themselves" (p. 36). Later, he claims that the conspiracy took place even earlier. The British even *before* independence had decided to prepare the country for a phoney independence (pp. 279–81). Later still, he claims that the change of policy did not occur "almost immediately" after independence, but that the developed world cooperated with the African states for some time before changing their policy (p. 450). Consistency is not a virtue of Mr. Bing's book.

[4] This is not only untrue, but silly. The University had by 1961, when the foreign exchange crisis started, produced more graduates in Economics (the particular complaint of Mr. Bing) than in any other discipline apart from History. Only a handful of graduates were trained in Classics and Ancient History. The University of Ghana comes in for a lot of abuse from Mr. Bing; but surprisingly, he keeps silent over the abuses Nkrumah's press used to hurl at Dr. C. C. O'Brien, the Vice-Chancellor, whom Mr. Bing describes as a "man with progressive ideas" (p. 364). The truth is that the University of Ghana refused to kow-tow to the whims and caprices of Nkrumah, Bing, and their accomplices and to be taken in by their fanciful ideas.

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determine what they support and despise in Ghanaian society. What, therefore, predisposes them to support Nkrumah is that he is thought to be against their enemies in the West, not because of his achievements for Ghanaians or Africans. Certainly, this approach to Ghana's problems comes up every now and again in Mr. Bing's narrative. At every turn in the narrative he is over-anxious to attack Western papers and authors, and to defend Nkrumah's record—and his own—against their criticisms. It is not, indeed, an exaggeration to say that that is the whole purpose of his book—and he himself says almost as much. The primary purpose of the book, according to Mr. Bing, is not to defend Nkrumah, his Ministers or his Party, nor even the author himself; his main purpose is to explain "the important lesson in its world context which Ghana provides."

It is important to emphasise this point if Ghanaians, and Africans generally, are to draw the right conclusions from Nkrumah's tragic failure. One very important reason why Nkrumah failed in Ghana, and was alienated not only from the "intellectuals" or the "élite" but, in the last years of his régime, from "the masses" as well, was that he relied too much on foreign political advisers, mostly left-wing dissidents at odds with their own societies. These people never understood Ghana. Mr. Bing pretends to great authority in Ghana, but his interpretation of various aspects of Ghanaian society is frequently faulty and his factual mistakes are legion.

Thus it is simply nonsensical to say that the Aborigines Rights Protection Society were supporters of Indirect Rule (p. 45). It is equally nonsensical to include members of the National Liberation Council among the aristocratic class (p. 62), whatever that means in the Ghanaian context. Nobody in Ghana has ever believed that the Colonial legacy included "a completely efficient or a completely incorrupt police force" (p. 71). The Cocoa Marketing Board was certainly not an exploitative instrument foisted on the farmers by the Colonial Office (p. 90). The views on chieftaincy attributed to Akufo Addo and William Ofori Atta (p. 93) are in fact wrong and indicate Mr. Bing's basic ignorance of the political history of Ghana. Mr. Bing's account of how Nkrumah was called to the general secretaryship of the United Gold Coast Convention (p. 93) is, to say the least, fanciful. It is not true to say that Casely Hayford resigned office once "he was convinced that he was not a success" (p. 119). R. R. Amponsah was not a member of the Constitutional Commission appointed by the N.L.C. after the Coup (p. 240) nor were Busia, Dombo, and Joe Appiah, leaders of the Opposition to Nkrumah (pp. 266–67) etc., etc.

When Mr. Bing claims, *inter alia*, that Sir Arku Korsah was a link between the C.P.P. and the "old ruling families" (p. 311) he shows that he did not grasp the movement of opinion in Ghana. When he speaks repeatedly of the "aristocratic families," "the ruling families," or people from "royal families"; when he describes the C.P.P. as being "in its final analysis, a peasant party" (p. 122); when he claims that terms like "Marxists" and "non-denominational christianity" had a "revolutionary ring" in the ears of the farmers (pp. 124–25); when he declares that during the agitation over federation in Ghana the poorer farmers sided with the C.P.P. while the wealthy farmers lined up behind the chiefs (p. 158); when he refers to the "Zongos" as "the working-class quarters of (Ghana's) large towns" (p. 127) etc., etc., Mr. Bing shows his lack of understanding of Ghanaian society and himself a victim of the delusions of old-fashioned Western European class-conscious socialists.

This ignorance was partly due to the mystical belief in ideology which seemed to them to produce infallible solutions on *a priori* grounds, and partly to the fact that they did not understand any Ghanaian language, and without this could scarcely ever hope to understand Ghanaian society. Thus, the left-wing advisers' basically Euro-centric views were accentuated and Nkrumah was bombarded with advice and suggestions and prescriptions which alienated him further and further from Ghanaians. And as the policies based on their advice engendered more and more opposition, the totalitarian apparatus was given greater force. This went on until (to adapt Marx) the nationalist and freedom-loving Ghanaian society became incompatible with its foreign and totalitarian integument; the system burst asunder and the oppressors felt themselves oppressed, if temporarily.[5]

[5] Nkrumah corroborates this statement rather unexpectedly: "It pays no one to tamper with Ghanaian freedom and dignity" (Kwame Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1968, p. 29). Mr. Bing complains of his treatment after the Coup when he was arrested (p. 20). Many Ghanaians thought he was much luckier than the victims of Nkrumah's régime who languished in condemned cells for years until the Coup.

An authoritative study of the operation of the Preventive Detention Act is being made by Professor Adu Boahen and Mr. K. E. de Graft Johnson of the University of Ghana. Meanwhile glimpses of the cruelties perpetrated by the Nkrumah régime may be had from two reports containing extracts from evidence of witnesses at a Commission of Enquiry into Ghana Prisons: *Dr. J. B. Danquah, Detention and Death in Nsawam Prison* and *Mr. E. Obetsebi-Lamptey, Detention and Death in Nsawam Prison*, both published by the Ministry of Information, Accra.

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THE MOVEMENT FOR INDEPENDENCE never meant —and still does not mean—the physical expulsion of Europeans from the Continent of Africa or any part of it. But it meant and still does mean removing them from policy-making positions so that the indigenous people or their accredited representatives can gain full control over these positions. That is why sometimes the total number of Europeans in a colony, as in Ghana, can actually increase after independence. Once Africans are in the policy-making positions they realise that they need people with particular technical skills, doctors, engineers, managers and administrators, agriculturalists, sometimes even lawyers, if their development is to be rapid and effective. However, the ideological "advisers" of Nkrumah and other African leaders scarcely belong to this category of persons with particular technical skills; they are strictly men of "policy." They seek to influence and direct the policy-making organs of the independent African countries. To the extent that they succeed in driving away independent-minded and educated Africans from the centre of decision-making they become the new colonialists, foreigners controlling the policy-making organs of African countries. Mr. Bing asks the question: "Is there any way in which individuals with political experience in the developed countries can assist in serving the development of the less developed world?" If Africans mean to be masters in their own house, if they mean to pursue policies that are in tune with the freely expressed wishes and aspirations of the African "masses," then the answer to this question must be an emphatic "No!"

ARE WE TOO CLOSE to the Nkrumah era in Ghana and Africa to be able to write a definitive and objective history of it? I am afraid that we cannot even assume too readily that this era is past. The best that can be done now is to ensure that all viewpoints are available for the future historian.

I would not wish to deny that Nkrumah had solid achievements to his credit. The ideals he preached, if through sheer percussive propaganda, have had an impact on the minds of Ghanaians, especially the younger ones. "Social justice," "Pan-African unity," "anti-colonialism" and "positive neutrality"; the insistence that social services like education and health services should be made available to all; that in the affairs of the state the "poorest he" counts as much as the "richest he"; that it is a worthwhile, indeed an urgent, object of public policy to bring all African countries under one effective government; and that material aid ought to be given by independent countries in Africa to those Africans still fighting against colonialism and minority domination in Southern Africa —these, among others, are part of every Ghanaian's mental equipment nowadays. Indeed, judged by these very standards, Nkrumah had failed so miserably by 1966 that Ghanaians of all classes in that year of liberation could not help but rejoice enthusiastically at his downfall. In the practical field, too, Nkrumah's achievements are undeniable. During the fifteen years of his reign, communications, especially roads and harbours, were improved; social services were extended; new industries were established; the gap between the North (largely neglected in the colonial era) and the rest of the country was narrowed; the country was, by and large, united; and the political consciousness of the average Ghanaian was raised.

However, anyone who knows anything about the history of Ghana before Nkrumah's rule cannot be impressed by the exaggerations with which his achievements are held out to the outside world and the rest of Africa by his ideological admirers on the Left and also by his professional propagandists.[6] Lofty ideals in politics and public life, including those of "Pan-Africanism" and the need to uphold the dignity of the African, have been commonplaces in Ghana for at least a century. When a Ghanaian thinks of the proud cultures of the various ethnic groups making up Ghana today, and of such distinguished public figures as Mensah Sarbah, Attoh Ahuma, Casely Hayford, James Kwegyir Aggrey, the leaders of the Fanti Confederacy, Nana Sir Ofori Atta I, Dr. Danquah, *et al.*, he cannot help feeling hurt when non-Ghanaians talk and write as if Ghana was a collection of lost peoples without a history, without culture, and without a tradition of public service until Nkrumah appeared on the scene—as if Nkrumah was to Ghana what Newton was said to be to Science:

Ghana and Ghana's people lay hid in Night;
God said "Let Nkrumah be" and all was Light.

[6] An example is *Africa and the World*, a review published in London, which has been carrying scurrilous attacks on post-Coup Ghana. The magazine was set up with Ghanaian public funds by Nkrumah, but it is completely under the control of an Englishman. See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the Commercial Activities of the Erstwhile Publicity Secretariat.* (Ghana Information Services, Accra, 1967). Par. 86–98 and 185–186. See also *Nkrumah's Deception of Africa* (Ghana Information Service, Accra, 1966) ch. XII.

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Nor can one wax ecstatic over Nkrumah's practical achievements because he had fifteen years to unfold the genius to which he so immoderately laid claim: after all the country never lacked adequate economic resources to support its development. The colonial era, despite its acute shortcomings and its basically objectionable character, was not the stagnant era of waste that the latter-day *simplificateurs* would have us believe. Even during the colonial era Ghana, then the Gold Coast, was already ahead of all other colonies in tropical Africa (including the Belgian Congo and the Rhodesias, if one considers only the Africans and excludes the over-privileged and pampered white minorities). That is why one Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Alan Burns, could describe the country in 1947 as "the model colony," and is, indeed, the basic reason why the Gold Coast was the first colony in Black Tropical Africa to become independent.

The question, then, is not what Nkrumah achieved, but what he *could* have achieved with the time and resources at his disposal.

I SHOULD LIKE to isolate five specific factors which engendered much opposition to Nkrumah, especially in educated Ghanaian circles, in spite of his achievements:

1. IRRATIONALITY. Nkrumah's régime was utterly irrational in its approach to problems. The independence movement thrived on intense emotionalism and consequently it threw up people whose only qualification for leadership was the ability to arouse passions. These people in fact depended on excitement for the sustenance of their support, and Nkrumah himself desperately needed it in order to bolster up his "charismatic" appeal. Indeed, it was only when he was in an emotional mood that he felt politically at ease.[7] He therefore found it essential to generate an atmosphere of burning intensity. That is why he exploited religious forms so much.[8] Such an atmosphere, however, put intelligence and reason at a discount. It put a premium on quackery and charlatanism. Critics who insisted on applying rational canons to problems became "enemies of the people" because they were, indirectly, undermining the *Osagyefo's* position. This partly explains some of the paradoxes of Nkrumah's régime. His obvious preference for corrupt and semi-literate *yes*-men was not exactly calculated to realise his publicly proclaimed aims. The manner in which decisions involving the expenditure of millions of pounds of public money were sometimes taken was simply irresponsible, even frivolous. And the uses to which public funds were sometimes put were incompatible with the proclaimed objective of rapid economic development.

Mr. Bing himself cites good examples of irrational decisions—although he seems to admire them. Ghana's purchase of *VC-10* aircraft was justified; only "what was lacking was diplomatic negotiation of landing rights, the scientific prospecting of new routes and technical planning generally" (p. 398). The whole of the Ghana Airways enterprise was well conceived; only "all that was missing was the staff able to work out in detail the complicated arrangements necessary to make it work." Indeed, "often an opportunity was opened up but somewhere along the line the specialist, the administrator, the technician or even the typist needed to despatch the letter was missing and the project came to nothing in consequence." It does not occur to Mr. Bing that what he is defending is a magnificent formula for throwing away millions of pounds of real money.

Those who dared to criticise were dubbed "imperialist stooges," "reactionary intellectuals" guilty of the crime of possessing an "Oxbridge mentality," "neo-colonialist stooges," or worse. Yet how, without adopting severely rational methods, can we ever hope (in Nkrumah's words) "to accomplish in a single generation what it has taken developed nations 300 years or more to achieve"?

2. CORRUPTION. Corruption was not brought into Ghana by Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (C.P.P.), nor has it disappeared from the country's political scene. One cannot even hope that it will ever disappear

[7] In Parliament Nkrumah was a pathetic figure. His speeches were incoherent and the cut and thrust of debate was utterly beyond him. But he came alive when he addressed crowds at party rallies or when he addressed such bodies as Freedom Fighters' conferences where emotional symbols could be manipulated with complete freedom.

[8] Mr. Bing treats Nkrumah's exploitation of religion with indulgence. It would appear that Mr. Bing himself caught a little of the air of superstition which surrounded Nkrumah. He harps a lot on "shrines" and "juju." Close association between the Army and shrines facilitated the organisation of the Coup, according to Mr. Bing. And the Asantehene's membership of the Society of Freemasons is interpreted in terms of "juju" and shrines (pp. 124–133). Or is he merely measuring up to what is expected of Africa?

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completely. All that could legitimately be asked of Nkrumah was that he should take steps to reduce its incidence in the society. But this never happened. Indeed it was obvious that he preferred to work with corrupt politicians. Persons who were condemned as corrupt by Commissions of Enquiry set up by the government itself received promotions or were merely transferred to other posts.[9] Reports of Commissions of Enquiry were doctored by the government before publication[10] in order to shield Nkrumah's henchmen. It was widely believed that cuts on contracts and purchases of ships, planes and locomotives were taken by his Ministers and some Senior Civil Servants.[11] The Cocoa Purchasing Company and, after it, the United Farmers Co-operative Council, set up to help the farmers, were engaged in systematically defrauding the farmers.[12] Vast sums of money entrusted to party hacks and dubious characters for subversive work in other African countries were known to be diverted into private pockets.

Rather than check these practices Nkrumah turned them to his personal advantage—by using the evidence of corruption to blackmail those guilty into intensifying their personal support for him. So utterly dependent did his corrupt henchmen thus become that a very powerful reason for upholding his position at all costs and by any means was their simple desire to stay out of jail. Nkrumah himself was also believed to be personally corrupt. In launching the Seven-Year Development Plan in March 1964, Nkrumah appealed to his countrymen to repatriate their foreign capital back home. His own parliamentary supporters openly laughed at him. After his departure from Parliament House one of them whispered in a Ghanaian language, in a tone distinct enough to be heard in the gallery, that "he should first repatriate his. . . ." But the evidence of the extent of his corruption that has come out since the Coup has surprised even his severest critics in Ghana.

Nkrumah's supporters have poohpoohed accusations of corruption against their hero on various grounds. One is that he did not distinguish between his private pocket and public coffers, "like an African chief." But still, under Nkrumah, humble public servants were jailed for failing to make this very elementary and healthy distinction. Another ground is that in his will Nkrumah gave everything to the State. Does this mean that the right to purloin from the public chest on condition that the remainder of what is purloined will be handed back to the state on one's death-bed should be conceded to every public official? A last ground is that in every developing country and, indeed, in every political system there is corruption. And does this mean that since in every society there are common burglars, no one need complain about burglary? In any case, Nkrumah is accused not of political corruption but of personal corruption having nothing to do with politics (*e.g.*, dishing out public funds to jujumen and numerous paramours). It is important that Africans should not be taken in by "theories of corruption" in developing countries because in our economic conditions the type of corruption we have experienced is a fundamental factor in retarding economic development. Mr. Bing's indulgent attitude to corruption in Ghanaian society can only be viewed by a Ghanaian with utter dismay. A Minister's wife buys a real golden bed (a purchase that was headline-news at the time it occurred). Mr. Bing sees in this only the Minister's retort to the Ashanti Golden Stool, and he adds insult to injury by describing the Minister as "a sincere egalitarian . . .

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[9] Two famous examples may be cited. Mr. Krobo Edusei was condemned in 1954 when he was a junior minister by a Commission of Enquiry headed by Sir Arku Korsah (the most senior of the Ghanaian judges and soon to become Chief Justice) as unfit to hold public office. In spite of this, he rose to Cabinet rank and later became Minister of Interior responsible for administering the Preventive Detention Act. Mr. Bing, understandably, makes no reference to this aspect of Mr. Krobo Edusei's history. Mr. Djin was first dismissed from public office in 1956 as a result of censure by a Commission of Enquiry, an action which Mr. Bing describes as "justified" (p. 179). He, however, forgets to add that Mr. Djin later rose to become ambassador to the Congo and a Cabinet Minister and to be condemned (again) by another Commission of Enquiry!

[10] Examples are the *Report of Commission of Enquiry into alleged Irregularities and Malpractices in connection with the Issue of Import Licences (1964)* (The "Akainya Report") and *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Trade Malpractices in Ghana.* (The "Abraham Report"). Chapter 3 of the *Akainya Report* was omitted from the published version, but the government forgot to re-number the chapters. Mr. Bing passes over the histories of these Commissions in meaningful silence.

[11] These suspicions and rumours have been amply substantiated since the Coup. See *Report of the Commission to enquire into Kwame Nkrumah Properties*; *Report of the Commission to enquire into the Affairs of Nadeco Limited* and *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into Irregularities and Malpractices in the Grant of Import Licences* (1967) (The "Ollennu Report") all published by the Ministry of Information, Accra, 1966–7.

[12] See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the affairs of the Cocoa Purchasing Company Limited* (1956) and *Report of the Committee of Enquiry on the Local Purchasing of Cocoa* (Ministry of Information, Accra).

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liberty, equality and fraternity summed up his political philosophy."[13]

3. DICTATORSHIP. It is not at all clear why Nkrumah's supporters (communists apart) deny that his system of government, at any rate since 1960, was dictatorial. To those Africans who lived in fear of the midnight knock on the door; to those whose breadwinners could vanish overnight; to those who could lose their livelihood and their jobs at the *dikɛtat* of the *Osagyefo* (or even of a District Commissioner); to those whose property could be seized, not through any due process of law, but by the mere command of the "boss"; to those who were systematically spied upon, and to those university lecturers whose lectures were constantly "reported"; to those who suffered the paralytic effect of the Preventive Detention Act—the régime was clearly and unmistakably dictatorial. And the dictatorship was no less real to those pathetic followers of Nkrumah (Ministers, members of the Central Committee of "the Party," M.P.s, Special Advisers and Party officials) who moaned in private and praised in public; they gathered enough courage to criticise the "Old Man" in his absence, but trembled in his presence.

The Republican Constitution of 1960 elevated the President above Parliament, and subsequent amendments increased further the concentration of power in his own hands. (The last one in fact decreed that no one could be nominated for the Presidency unless he was a member of the C.P.P. and his nomination approved by Nkrumah![14]) He sought to bring all institutions under the party, which had itself degenerated into his personal machine. The only two important institutions he had not succeeded in capturing by the time of the Coup were the churches and the universities. But by that time he had usurped the power (contrary to the law passed by his own Parliament and approved by himself) to appoint the Vice-Chancellors; and he also claimed, unsuccessfully (thanks to the resistance of Dr. O'Brien), the power to direct the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana to appoint his Party men Professors. The "Central Committee of the C.P.P.," in whose name important decisions (*i.e.*, dismissing M.P.s from Parliament) were often announced, did not in practice exist; and the M.P.s dared not criticise the *Osagyefo*, the Government, or "the Party." The whole authoritarian farce was finally unmasked when (in 1965) a whole Parliament of 198 members was hand-picked by "the Central Committee" and returned "unopposed"!

4. MEGALOMANIA. This was the most abiding quality of the man.[15] This helps to explain a lot of what I have already described. Irrationalism, corruption, and dictatorship were all anchored in Nkrumah's megalomania. What was called opposition to Nkrumah often consisted only in a firm refusal to join in exacerbating the disease. There was no place one could not get by singing the man's praises, no corruption one could not get away with through adulation. There were always doubts about the authorship of his books, but he never acknowledged his debts to his ghost writers or even to his research assistants. He announced on the radio that he was not "the maker but the instrument of history" and that he was "the conscience of the nation." The whole public relations apparatus of the government, both internal and external, was geared to building him up as the indispensable leader of Ghana and Africa[16] and his African policy was constructed

[13] Mr. Bing's account of how the commission into the affairs of the Cocoa Purchasing Company came to be set up is to say the least, curious (pp.170–2). His treatment of the Savundra case (in Ghana) is strange. But his treatment of Nkrumah's corruption is astonishing (pp. 401–4). He ignores solid proof that has come out since the Coup and refuses to deal with numerous scandalous deals; he battles, as usual, with the British press and even draws invidious comparisons with royalty in Europe and the Middle East in an attempt to cover up his hero's corruption. In this exercise he is sometimes reckless. He claims, for example, that commissions of Inquiry established since the Coup have confirmed that Nkrumah transferred no money outside and that no one had come forward to prove that Nkrumah had a large fortune in Ghana (p. 404).

Unfortunately for Mr. Bing, these very points have been specifically established by the *Report of the Commission to Enquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties* (1966), especially par. 110, 336, 496 and 497.

[14] See the Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1965 (Act 290), and the Presidential Elections Act, 1965 (Act 292), section 4 (b)–(d).

[15] His paranoiac tendencies were helped along by several persons, both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian. Mr. Bing's whole narrative is an eloquent testimony to his own personal contribution. M. Habib Niang, a Senegalese pseudo-intellectual, once claimed in a talk at the University of Ghana that Nkrumah was "the world's first real political philosopher," better than Plato, Aristotle, Hobbes, Rousseau, Locke, *et al.*, "all put together." A Cabinet Minister, also in a speech at the University of Ghana not long before the Coup, compared Nkrumah to Christ. (He was one of the first people to denounce Nkrumah after his downfall.)

[16] See *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the Commercial Activities of the Erstwhile Publicity Secretariat* (Ministry of Information, Accra), esp. paras. 1–12 and 82–132.

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on that assumption. So "Freedom Fighters" did not only come to Ghana, but had to be fêted; they did not only travel about on Ghana's ticket, but had to do so *de luxe*; they did not only have to be accommodated in New York at Ghana's expense, but in first-class hotels. No wonder many of them could never go back to their countries as real "Freedom Fighters." The truth is that Nkrumah was systematically bribing them with Ghana's money so that they would support him for the leadership of Africa. Those who refused to be hoodwinked in this way were given short shrift. For his megalomania alone, if not for anything else, Nkrumah had to be removed if the country were ever to return to a path of sober progress.

5. MISMANAGEMENT. How could an economy survive the combined effect of so much unreason, so much corruption, so cruel a dictatorship and so wild-eyed a leader? Much has been made of the drop in the world price of cocoa, but Nkrumah cannot be blamed for that. What he was and should be justifiably blamed for was the alarming way in which he managed the economy, for he managed it as if the country had such abundant resources that waste did not matter. By the time of the Coup the cumulative losses of state enterprises were in the region of £15 million (money still had to be found to pay the credits with which they were originally set up). In 1965 when the price of cocoa reached its lowest point since World War II, Nkrumah (without reference to anybody) decided to put up, solely for the Organisation of African Unity conference in Accra that year, a vast complex of buildings costing £10 million.[17] Dubious contracts involving several tens of millions of pounds were signed with businessmen of equally dubious character. Contracts were signed with East European countries which enabled them to fob off on Ghana second-hand machinery (repainted as new) and extremely shoddy consumer goods. More than £3 million were spent on an 18-mile stretch of prestige motor-way near the capital—in an economy crying for countryside feeder-roads. The pattern of the government's expenditure showed no signs of reflecting the crisis in the besieged economy. He claimed (so it was said) that no country had ever been taken to court for indebtedness! (Even this was not true: *cf.* the history of Liberia.) It was too much to ask the country to believe that the drop in cocoa price was responsible for the shortages in consumer-goods like car spares, raw materials, books, etc., while millions of pounds were being wasted. The economy's disease was *white-elephantiasis*. No wonder the standard of living of Ghanaians actually decreased during the latter years of Nkrumah's rule.[18] Relief just had to come.

[17] Mr. Bing argues that the conference buildings would (by offering facilities for international conferences) have provided a good basis for the tourist trade in Ghana. As he knows only too well, no examination of such a policy was ever made before millions of pounds were committed. In any case all attempts since the Coup to use the buildings for that very purpose have failed. A look at the main building—a veritable prison-house of sixty super-luxury flats—will quickly remind any observer of its original purpose: to provide accommodation of maximum security for the Heads of States and Governments attending the O.A.U. conference in Accra in 1965.

The truth of the matter is that Nkrumah hoped to entice the conference to base the permanent headquarters of the O.A.U. in Accra. Needless to say, the Heads of States and Government scented the bait and immediately decided to select Addis Ababa as the permanent headquarters.

[18] Mr. Bing seeks to give the impression that all attempts to get an economic adviser of stature before Independence were deliberately frustrated by the Colonial Office (pp. 145–47). But he quietly passes over the fact that later the government obtained the services of no less an economist than Professor Arthur Lewis. The fact that Mr. Bing nowhere in his narrative so much as mentions his name shows how untrustworthy his account basically is.

NKRUMAH'S supporters have gone through many a mental gyration to prove, on no evidence at all, that Ghana's Coup on 24 February 1966 was organised by outside forces, especially the American C.I.A.

The most unreliable section of Mr. Bing's book is that dealing with the Coup and conditions in Ghana after it. He tries by all kinds of ingenious arguments to blame the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, and Israel. Every type of circumstantial evidence is dragged in without avail, and he is finally forced to resort to "the type of analysis the fictional detective generally is portrayed as using . . ." (p. 435). The only solid conclusion he arrives at is that "it is impossible to say more than there is a *prima-facie* case that the C.I.A. may have had a hand in the plot" (p. 433). Yet by the end of the book Mr. Bing is claiming positively that the "revolt" was "no doubt" provoked by "direct" Western "intervention in Ghanaian internal affairs" (p. 449). To go one better, he also implies that the Opposition "engineered" the Coup (p. 306) and, again, that the Coup was all a tribal conspiracy by Ewes (p. 427). Incidentally, Mr. Bing's own

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star witness, Kwame Nkrumah, can bring forward no evidence either in support of the thesis, which he also naturally upholds, that the Coup was the work of outside forces:

> In Ghana the embassies of the United States, Britain and Germany were all implicated in the plot to overthrow my government. It is alleged that the U.S. Ambassador Franklin Williams offered the traitors 13 million dollars to carry out a *coup d'état*. Afrifa, Harlley and Kotoka were to get a large share of this if they would assassinate me at Accra Airport as I prepared to leave for Hanoi. I understand Afrifa said: "I think I will fail" and declined the offer. So apparently did the others... (*Dark Days in Ghana*, p. 49).

Nkrumah sees better evidence of foreign intervention in the depressed world cocoa price in 1965. According to him, the U.S.A. and Britain forced down the price of cocoa as "part of their policy of preparing the economic ground for political action in the form of a 'coup' and a change of government" (p. 95). So no sooner had the Coup taken place than "the price of cocoa suddenly rose on the world market." However, Mr. Bing has to admit that the price of cocoa started picking up *before* the Coup and that by the time of the Coup it had reached £177 per ton.

Mr. Bing's ideas about post-Coup conditions in Ghana are built on exaggerations and half-truths. He paints a gloomy picture of the economy, happily forgetting to add that this was the inevitable and direct result of Nkrumah's economic recklessness. He harps on the alleged lack of press freedom in Ghana. But a glance at the press in post-Coup Ghana will show two startling differences from the Nkrumah era. (*1*) While full press freedom has by no means been achieved the state-owned press is much, much freer than it ever was under Nkrumah. (*2*) Since the Coup, the *Pioneer* (an Opposition paper suppressed by Nkrumah's régime) has been resurrected and has been highly critical of the N.L.C.; and there has been established at the University of Ghana a new bi-monthly, the *Legon Observer*, which is independent and has been saying things which no newspaper could dare say under the Nkrumah régime. Mr. Bing fails to mention these papers. He claims that the N.L.C. régime is "naked police and army rule." To any unprejudiced observer the present régime in Ghana is liberalism itself compared with the Nkrumah régime. Mr. Bing claims that the reorganisation of the courts was a "purge of judges who had ruled against them in *habeas corpus* proceedings and the like" (p. 415). If he can believe this he can believe anything (and he does).

It is futile to argue with such minds. For their conclusions are embedded in their premises: by definition Nkrumah could only be overthrown by the Devil and his collaborators. The proper question for Ghanaians—and for Africans generally—is a solemn one, and one that should lead to reflection and self-criticism. Why is it that an African leader, who started off with immense popular support, appeared so well-meaning and was looked to by the whole of Africa for leadership, should in the end have been rejected by his own people? Why, in fact, should his own people have rejoiced with such uninhibited ecstasy at his overthrow?

In the failure of Nkrumah lies a Ghanaian tragedy. In the failure of Africans to learn the true lessons from his downfall will lie an African tragedy.

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Price of Nihilism

DR. E. J. MISHAN'S [ENCOUNTER, March 1969] thoughts on university reform are headlined as "heretical." This is, of course, too modest. There is nothing "heretical" about them. Academic economists everywhere are propounding these prescriptions for the proper financing of universities, so that they will be freer from the pressure of state money, and for the proper financing of students, so that they (and their parents) will be freer to choose what they want, and do not want, to study.

Nobody sketched the baselines of an economic approach better than Dr. Mishan's colleague Professor Harry Johnson, in his inaugural lecture at the London School of Economics in October 1967.[1]

Taking the troubles at L.S.E. as one of his clinical examples of the proper economic approach to social questions, Professor Johnson stated a series of propositions. The first was the fact of "the general democratisation of higher education," largely or entirely financed through government. The consequence of this, he argued, since it was no longer the old and recognised *élite* that was being educated, was that "the teachers ask themselves whether they are getting money for their value, and the taught ask themselves whether they are getting value for their (or their society's) money."

Cut off from the old Oxbridge esteem, and asked to work in London or elsewhere for less than they could get in other bureaucratic occupations, the dons "have on the average reduced the amount of work they have been willing or accustomed to provide in exchange for their salaries, in order to make up the difference by outside earnings." Marginally, therefore, the standards of appointment to academic jobs have been lowered to bring in men and women willing to do the job of teaching the new non-*élite*.

The core of complaint by those students who still wish to be taught and examined in the established fashion is thus given, quite unemotively, its justification. This characteristically precise argument by Professor Johnson is only put a bit askew because the present wish of many dissident students—and not necessarily anarchic or nihilistic ones—is not at all to be taught according to the conventional canon, and assumptions, of the old Oxbridge *élite*. What they want is that the right sort of teachers should be available for the new sort, as they see it, of teacher/taught dialogue. What has happened to them is that the gap between them and their teachers, between teachers and taught, has widened, not just for economic reasons but for ideological ones as well. They mean something different by "democratisation."

The particular points of Professor Johnson's economic analysis, latched directly on to the L.S.E.'s own recent troubles, went straighter to the point. The School, sitting prescriptively on a narrow near-City London site that is "an increasingly uneconomic location for the pursuit of undergraduate education," can offer only overcrowding and congestion to both students and staff. The "impact of this pressure of the laws of rent" means that there is an incentive for staff to minimise their time spent within the School, and for students to maximise the time they spend, in crowds, there. The perilous gap, and the frustration of student/staff expectations, are widened physically.

DR. MISHAN IS NOT concerned, overtly, with the peculiar circumstances of L.S.E. He is concerned with the "general democratisation of higher education," and its generally ill effects, economically, educationally and politically. Traditionally, Professor Johnson argued, higher education has derived its value from the means of entry it has given to a national, and limited, *élite*. Now, with the growth of higher education, financed by the rest of society, there is no guarantee of entry to whatever *élite* society may still retain. Indeed, with the old Oxbridge-style gates to the old places of influence, if not power, cut down, there is no obvious reason, Dr. Mishan argues, why State aid to higher or further education should give its preference to the now pseudo-*élite* of the present enlarged regiment of 200,000 university students. Why these who have managed to get university places, and not the others who have not? Dr. Mishan suggests a lot of cost/benefit sums, both in terms of individual students and in terms of society's gains and losses, to bolster his view that the money might be better spent, both individually and socially. He does not exactly prove anything.

It might look as if Dr. Mishan believed in an even wider "democratisation of higher education" than Professor Johnson was talking about. But this is not really his point, as I try to

[1] Harry Johnson, "The Economic Approach to Social Questions," *Economica* (London), February 1968.

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understand it. I take his point to be, ideologically as well as economically, that the size and nature, the direction and location of our higher, and especially our university, education ought to be determined by consumer's choice, by the choice of students and parents, not by the man in Whitehall, or even by the consensus of dons and Treasury officials in the University Grants Committee. He says, in effect, that the calculations of the costs and benefits of university education in the national investment programme by administrative means is arbitrary, uneconomic and politically perilous—because students taken in on the state payroll, after the central sums have been done, expect (in Professor Johnson's words) "to receive more care and attention than the Government is prepared to pay for."

So Dr. Mishan belongs to the latter-day conventionally wise men, not only Colin Clark and Max Beloff, but Professor A. R. Press and Professor Wiseman, and Professors Alan T. Peacock and Anthony J. Culyer.[2] What they all rather startlingly assume is that if we get the economics of universities right, as we ought to do, the political troubles will thus be dispersed; in this, they are, all of them, as Marxist as the Marxists (or the Marcusians) are. Let us, says Dr. Mishan, fully cost a university place—at, say, £1,000 not just £70 tuition fees plus an average of £250 for maintenance. Yes, indeed. That is surely as right and as sensible for university places as for transport seats. Let us then charge this full cost directly to the student, and so finance all the universities by fees not direct grants to universities. Let us, preferably, where needed, not meet students' fees from grants, whether central or local, but by loans, since by comparison with their fellows their entry to university is a privilege not a deserved right.

THERE IS NOTHING to tear society apart in these "heresies." To count the real cost of university places is ordinary sense. To multiply the revenue of universities from students' fees, so as to meet the cost of their places—whether reimbursed or not from grants or loans—ought to add to the independent ability of the universities to spend their money as they will. But suddenly to turn all the present fictitiously small fees and grants into trebled or quadrupled full-cost fees or loans instead could be intolerably disruptive—as well as being inefficient. The present system of five-yearly current and capital grants from the Treasury to the universities through the University Grants Committee may indeed lean too heavily to-

[2] *Economic Aspects of Student Unrest.* The Institute of Economic Affairs, 3s. 6d.

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wards public decision and patronage. But suddenly to put this whole allocation of resources out into this imperfect market, with the bidding and bartering of parents and students in place of that admittedly insensitive central computer, could be both chaotic and inequitable. Fire after frying-pan, with smaller chance even than now (when the risk is a Minister's nod) of planning a proper programme, even for five years, for a university's provision. Surely any new programme has got to marry the old provisions with the new pricing, by the right blend of university grants and student fees.

The reformers are admittedly not just offering a better economic recipe. They all think, with different emphasis, that this is going to cure student unrest and dissatisfaction as well. Why do they think this? Do they think that, if they charge fully-costed fees, and give loans not grants, this will either reduce the number of takers or else bring in "a better class" of student, more docile and less likely to buck the line? I think not. Or do they think, as Professor Johnson would presumably argue, that in a university run on properly economic principles the provision for students as well as staff would so fall out that both would have that much less to complain about—and that much more to benefit from?

This is far from clear from the literature so far. One point they do make is that a freer university, with freer finance, would be freer to expel dissentients. This, I still believe, thinking of L.S.E., is a matter much more of law than of economics. And would fees and loans instead of grants make students more extrudable? The more positive point that Professors Peacock and Culyer underline is that with freer universities, freer to diversify their provisions, the non-conformist students might perhaps go more readily to places of their own choice instead of simply coming to wreck others.

I PUT MOST STORE MYSELF by the need for, and the worth of, more freedom of choice both for universities and for students. But I stay unconvinced that proper pricing is the panacea for all present discontents. However the financing of universities and of students may be sensibly re-jigged, to widen the choice of both, the amount of public money going somehow into the system will remain very large, and grow larger: or else the whole new university set-up —one of this country's only two achievements since the war—will simply, and disastrously, collapse. And, in so far as this whole ploy of "denationalising" university finance is intended to scotch the "student revolt," it just won't

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work. Get them all paying full fees, give them loans instead of grants, and you will still have the same *reformers*, the same *anarchists*, and the same *nihilists* among them.

It is quite true that if you put your universities on a proper footing, with proper costing, proper pricing, and proper remuneration (*à la* Professor Johnson), you might then be better able to meet student demands. Certainly you can meet those of the reformers, and some of those of the simple anarchists in a free community. But you will still not be able to meet the destructive demands of the nihilists, who do not want universities to work but only, through violent confrontation and intimidation, to break down.

I do not think you can cost or price the nihilists out of the universities. And I do think that if you pretend to be liberating the universities while in fact intending to purge them, you are playing into the hands of those who talk conspiratorially about the toils of "monopoly capitalism." I applaud the attempt to put the universities on an economic footing. But I believe here, as everywhere else, in the primacy of politics.

No university, however costed or priced, however tied to or freed from public money, can survive as a university with a nihilist element large enough to call the tune. Every university has much room for changes in constitution, curriculum, and character to meet the calls of reformers and even, as I think, of anarchists. But every one, to exist, has to be able to rebut and repudiate its nihilists—and that is a task, not for the price mechanism, not for the hidden hand, but for the continuing members of each university community, which means its own academic staff. It is a responsibility that they cannot dodge or argue away. It is not enough to count the real costs of their business; they have to stand up to be counted themselves as well—against those who want to paralyse the universities, not to liberate them at all.

Donald Tyerman

Nietzsche as Scapegoat

A Reply to Alasdair MacIntyre — By WALTER KAUFMANN

IT IS difficult to know with Professor MacIntyre's "Philosophy and Sanity: Nietzsche's Titanism" [ENCOUNTER, April] where to begin or how to get hold of a thesis that could be discussed fruitfully. At the outset the question is asked, half playfully, whether Nietzsche's insanity was somehow "the outcome of thinking Nietzsche's thought"; and in the end we get an affirmative answer, qualified with a "perhaps." In between no evidence *pro* or *con* is considered, and Nietzsche's medical history is ignored. From an ordinary journalist one might expect no more, but when prominent philosophers and sociologists write in this vein we must enquire *why* they do. What makes so many serious writers publish pieces of this sort?

Before we try to find an answer, let us take a quick look at the essay. In the second paragraph it is suggested that Nietzsche's "life is relevant to the understanding of his philosophy"; but nothing at all is said in support of this claim, and Nietzsche's life is ignored in what follows. Apparently the point was merely to establish that Nietzsche's notes (and specifically those in *The Will to Power*) are of "special interest." This conclusion is a commonplace, but the reason given for it is a bit odd.

If the "interest" were really mainly biographical, then each note should be considered in the context of Nietzsche's development and compared with what he said in his books. My edition of *The Will to Power* makes it easy to do this, but this is not the path taken in "Philosophy and Sanity." MacIntyre quotes from a single note that happens to antedate most of Nietzsche's major works and calls it, without giving any reasons for this curious claim, "the foundation of Nietzsche's doctrine." *Doctrine* here seems to refer to Nietzsche's whole philosophy, but after that quotation we lose all contact with Nietzsche's writings. The reader may well wonder whether the evidence for all that follows comes from Nietzsche's books or from hasty notes—or rather from the author's vague recollections.

Three paragraphs from the end we are suddenly brought up short: "If my argument is correct, then. . . ." But the "then" clause is palpably false. (That the "vulgarity" here attributed to Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch* (overman) depends on crude misunderstandings I have tried to show in detail in my *Nietzsche*,[1] and it would be tedious to repeat the demonstration here.) Hence it appears that the "argument" is *not* correct.

[1] *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1950); 3rd ed., rev. and enlarged, Princeton University Press, and Random House Vintage Books (1968).

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But here I am scoring a debater's point. The crass misrepresentation of Nietzsche's concept of the *Übermensch* is not at all entailed by the preceding pages, and hence its untenability does not *prove* the preceding argument wrong. In fact, we are not offered anything that closely resembles an argument; we are much closer to a stream of consciousness. Hence it may be inappropriate to offer any comments; one does not prick soap bubbles with a sword.

WHAT WAS SAID of Spinoza almost two hundred years ago, is true of Nietzsche: people have been treating him like a dead dog. Again and again, highly respected professors have written with pity or contempt of Nietzsche's madness, his irrationality, his unscholarly excesses, or his "intellectual responsibility for making the ideological task of the Nazis easier," while the very essays in which these sentiments were voiced showed exceedingly little regard for scholarship or rational argument or the "intellectual responsibility" that the writers of such essays might incur.

MacIntyre's article on "Nietzsche's Titanism" considers it crucial "that an argument as subtle and sophisticated as Nietzsche's does issue in such vulgarity" and "that a mind as splendid as Nietzsche's should reach so banal a conclusion"; and this is held to be "perhaps a further sign that it was the dilemma of a whole culture and not merely a private problem." But if the vulgarity and the banal conclusion cannot be attributed to Nietzsche; if they must be charged to his interpreters—what becomes of the dilemma of a whole culture? For the idiosyncrasies of this or that interpreter are of no concern to me, and I have no wish to subject them to the sort of speculation that they are so fond of lavishing on Nietzsche. But what *is* wrong with a culture that keeps producing such essays?

Sometimes interpreters of this type bring to mind painters of former centuries who included in their pictures small self-portraits that most viewers did not recognise as such. The difference is, of course, that these interpreters fail to recognise their own self-portraits. The psychological term for this is "projection"; and speaking in religious terms, it seems almost like a form of penance. But it has no purgative power until it ceases to be unconscious. Since Socrates and Plato the idea of the philosopher as a physician is familiar. One of the functions of a philosopher may well be to raise the unconscious into consciousness, not merely for the individual but for a whole culture.

Misinterpretations of a man's philosophy must first of all be refuted in detail. That is a task that cannot be eschewed by taking refuge

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in psychology or sociology. The texts come first. But once this task is accomplished, it would be rather unhumorous to keep repeating oneself when misinterpretations persist. Eventually it becomes reasonable to ask *why* they persist—not among those who do not read scholarly books but among professors who write books and articles and reviews.

ENDLESS MISINTERPRETATIONS are the price of immortality. This is almost a tautology because what we mean by calling a book, an *oeuvre*, or a man immortal is that they keep being interpreted; and the more is written about them, the more misinterpretations we get. But my epigram also points to a psychological phenomenon. Misinterpretations often represent the revenge of the small against the great; they are the price that mortals exact for immortality.

By becoming immortal a man breaks the bounds set for his fellow men as surely as if he had committed a crime; hence he may be turned into a scapegoat on whom those frustrated by their limitations can vent their accumulated resentment. To some extent, everyone who gets into print—by writing or by running for office or by being elected, especially to a high position—becomes the subject of obscene comments. But not all of the immortals become scapegoats; some are deified more or less and misunderstood with boundless generosity, like Sophocles and some religious figures.

Why, then, did Nietzsche become an almost archetypal scapegoat on whom any writer is allowed to vent his spleen with complete impunity? Before we answer this question, we must try to understand the need for scapegoats.

In our culture, the most obvious scapegoat is the criminal. Those who feel a strong emotional need to see a criminal punished usually have two motives. If the lawbreaker did what they would have *liked* to do but, in obedience to the law, perhaps afraid of punishment, did *not* do, they would feel like timid fools who had missed out on something for no good reason if he got away with it. He must be punished to justify them and show that they were not silly and scared but prudent and righteous. Moreover, the law that prohibits so many expressions of hatred and aggression provides this legal outlet: the outlaw.

The world of scholarship provides a parallel. Again decorum prohibits frank expressions of contempt or pity, hatred, and resentment against fellow scholars. Most reviews in the scholarly journals are, therefore, exceedingly dull. Nor is this just decorum. If a scholar is old, one does not want to hurt his feelings and make him sad; if he is young, one hesitates to blast his career. Of course, there are exceptions,

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and occasionally "scholarly" books are attacked *almost* without inhibitions. Sometimes the nastiness of such reviews bears ample evidence of pent-up resentment; sometimes it is redeemed by wit. In fact, book reviews provide most scholars with the only opportunity to transmute resentment and wit into print. But some inhibitions remain; some holds are barred. Even when a book is treated without mercy, its *author* is almost always shown some consideration; the possibility is allowed that some of his other writings may be better, and reviewers do not feel free to offer psychological speculations about living philosophers or to question their sanity. Confronted with literary works, critics often go further, but even here mental illness is generally considered taboo and not mentioned even in cases where it is beyond question.

DE MORTUIS NIL NISI BONUM is the opposite of the truth as far as most scholars and critics are concerned. If a writer has the decency to let his work die with him, one says nothing about him once the eulogies are over. But it is in the ranks of the immortals that scholars seek their scapegoats about whom they can write as they never would about the living. Who would care to count the living philosophers who are incomparably more unscholarly, irrational, and irresponsible than Nietzsche ever was? That is the point. What could not be said about them is said about him.

The question remains why Nietzsche became a scapegoat when so many other philosophers did not—at least not to the same extent. His very brilliance is part of the reason, and his literary excellence is also relevant. Great writers are considered fairer game than great philosophers or scholars, and a philosopher who had the temerity to write as well as Nietzsche did breaks the rules as surely as an outlaw.

Still, this is not the whole story. What other writer of equal genius had given so much offence to so many, including Christians, Germans, and Englishmen? The vast resentment he aroused did its share to turn him into one of the major scapegoats of all time. This explanation may seem much too simple to be true; but it is striking how appreciative of him the French have been, whom he so often praised so handsomely; and this is also true of such Irish writers as Shaw and Yeats, Joyce and O'Neill, who clearly did not feel offended by his lack of affection for the English and for Christianity.

Once it was established by the force of ample precedent that utterly unscholarly and unfair articles and books on Nietzsche did not impair their authors' reputations even when they were exposed, writers with no particular reason for resenting Nietzsche joined the fray to blow off steam. Nietzsche-baiting had become an institution.

The implications for our "whole culture" are dismal. Not only decorum but also the intellectual conscience makes demands that even leading intellectuals resent. Even among them rationality is often only skin-deep. They require outlets for occasional rebellions against the demands of scholarship and sanity. One socially approved method is to write about Nietzsche, accusing him of having done what one is in the process of doing oneself.

Have I, too, criticised the very things that I myself am doing in these pages? I think not. Beginning with my first book, I have made it a point of honour to defend the dead and attack the living who can fight back. More than that, I have long admired Nietzsche's pronouncement in *Ecce Homo*:[2]

> I never attack persons; I merely avail myself of the person as of a strong magnifying glass that allows one to make visible a general but creeping and elusive calamity.

[2] "Why I am So Wise," section 7, p. 688 (in my *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, Random House Modern Library, 1968).

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Partridge in a Word Tree

By Anthony Burgess

LIKE many people who make their living out of them, I am very fond of words. A fondness for words does not, I know, necessarily make one a good writer. Mr. Geoffrey Grigson, the *Country Life* reviewer and poet, recently, in a review of a book of mine, expressed wonder that a person who professed such fondness for words should write so badly. I am not sure what exactly bad writing is, but Mr. Grigson is a very distinguished writer and he ought to know. That he writes wonderfully I am the first to admit—I have been so enthralled by some of his writing in *Country Life* that I have failed to hear the dentist's summons—and perhaps this has something to do with his not being very fond of words. If you are fond of words you let them get out of control, and good writing is perhaps essentially controlled writing. When I lived in Sussex I delighted in being able to look out on the Kentish Weald, but my delight had nothing to do with its wooded hilliness. What I liked was the word *weald* and how, through such processes as *i*-mutation, vowel-rounding, and vocalisation of the dark *L*, it tied up with *wold*, *wood* and the German *Wald*. Mr. Grigson has quite possibly written a poem on the Kentish Weald (he has written so many poems, a lot of them extremely fine, and I should imagine that country matters come into the subject-material of his age-group), but there will be nothing about *i*-mutation in that poem. A man of learning, he probably remembers Dr. Johnson's saying that things are the sons of heaven while words are only the daughters of men. The daughters of men have always been good enough for me, but a poet is perhaps himself a son of heaven, like a thing, and has a responsibility to his own kin.

I recognise that a fondness for words is, quite apart from its hindering one's chances as a writer, more of a lowly hobby than a sacerdotal vocation. It is perhaps on the same level as a fondness for collecting stones abraded by the beach, or keeping hamsters, or doing anything else which fills up spare time with mild pleasure. Mr. Ivor Brown collects strange words, and he exhibits these—*doddipol*, *refocillate*, and so on—in little books which are quite popular. This sort of thing is amusing, but it has little to do with the study of language. Drag a word out of a sentence, and you turn it into a pretty fossil. If we study how words behave in contexts, which is the only way to study them, then we're getting away from a mere hobby and beginning to practise a very stern science—that of linguistics. This science is becoming so very specialised that ordinary literary men are mystified by it and even resentful. Literary men are always being told, chiefly by such polymaths as Lord Snow, that they ought to know something about science. I think this means that they ought to learn just enough about nuclear biology to revere those men who know a lot, but it ought to mean that they should study the science of their raw material, get down to linguistics. When Lord Snow himself does this, lesser literary men may follow his example.

I HAVE BEEN INTERESTED in linguistics for a long time—an interest that grew out of teaching English to foreigners—but I have to confess that linguistics has gone too far for me to follow. There are linguistic laboratories full of cybernetic marvels, and it is hard for the mere amateur to get into those. And there is a proliferation of linguistic technology carrying in its train a vocabulary so vast and specialised that the time is coming when it will require a linguistic study of its own. Indeed, Dr. Mario Pei has already produced a weighty *Glossary of Linguistic Terminology*, full of terms like "*diffusion concept*" and "*morphophonemic allomorph*." The term *phoneme*, which most literary men think they understand clearly enough (*e.g.* Amis, *I Like It Here*: "cut Sinatra off in mid-phoneme"), appears with four separate definitions, starting with Bloomfield's "minimal unit of distinctive sound-feature" and ending with Fowkes' "minimal bundle of relevant sound features." Dorman says that the

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phoneme is a sound, and Fowkes says it is not: "it can be realised only through one of its allophones." I agree with the latter, but if I express agreement I must necessarily be looked on as a piece of intrusive dirt, not one of the professionals. And when you get on to suprasegmental parameters, you have reached a region where the literary man and the linguist have nothing in common at all: you have got beyond what can be fairly represented in traditional orthography.

There is, however, a field of true language study which lies between Mr. Ivor Brown's quaint old libraries and the unquaint new laboratories of the American linguists. It is concerned not with the analysis of sounds or structures but with the examination of meanings, and it is happier with the actual making of semantic catalogues, or dictionaries, than with arguing about, say, the overlap of semantics and anthropology or the borderlines between what is meaningful (*i.e.* lexical) and what is, so to speak, decorative (speech-tunes and stresses and so on). There is a New Zealander in England who follows Samuel Johnson in making lexicography a one-man calling and keeping it personal, healthily prejudiced, flavoursome and full of fun. This man is Eric Partridge, to whom, quite apart from his generosity to myself and my own work, I owe more hours of pleasurable uplift than I can well count. He is seventy-five this year, and is as vigorous as ever. His jubilee calls for more celebration than mere articles in magazines, but philology is rarely honoured by the State. Football, racing, and commerce are still regarded as more estimable than poring on the purity or impurity of the dialect of the tribe. Political men have no love of word-men.

PARTRIDGE'S PLEASURE in the English language has been manifested in the most diverse forms, and I'll start with the most hobbyish of his activities. I remember from the 1930s a couple of very good comedians called Clapham and Dwyer. They were always having to apologise or be barred from the BBC, which means they tended to heartening lowness. One evening on the radio they gave out an alphabet beginning *"A for 'orses"* and ending *"Z for a doctor, I've a code id the doze."* Partridge was not content merely to enjoy this. He brooded on the whole concept of the comic alphabet and eventually produced a book. A lot of work went into it—"opusculum and parergon alike," he calls it—and there is a long list of acknowledgments. The number of distinguished names among the lovers of comic alphabets is formidable, and Partridge's tribute is heart-warming: "People have, in short, been wonderfully kind. But then, the majority of people *are* kind." Outside the public sector, as it is called, I suppose people are, though I say it wrily. The curious thing about useless activities, like the crankier kinds of philology, is that they promote sodality, and that might be a sufficient justification for their existence.

But must not the average, say, shop-steward or economic myrmidon feel sour about all this time-waste on "*B* for mutton" and "*C* for Thighlanders"? Balls and skittles may be played with, but words, which are holy things used for enshrining departmental directives, may not. The truth is that, apart from one's right to amuse oneself occasionally, word-play is a kind of muscle-flexing for word-use, and to hold words down into the rules of a game is to learn control over them. What Partridge calls "the most relentless and intolerable of all alphabetical poems," "The Siege of Belgrade" in *The Bentley Ballads*, 1861), is indeed horrible, but it had to be written:

Why wish we warfare? Wherefore welcome we
Xerxes, Ximenes, Xanthus, Xaviere?
Yield, ye youths! ye yeomen, yield your yell!
Zeno's, Zarpatus', Zoroaster's zeal,
And all attracting—arms against appeal.

If you can do that sort of thing through all twenty-six letters, you may be fairly deemed literate, and not less if you can, to the tune of *Roly Poly, Gammon and Spinach*, end up like this:

W is for whore, who thinks fucking a farce,
X, Y and Z you can stuff up your arse.

Start off with a brain that can take pleasure in the scholarly collation of comic alphabets, and you end up with a genius that can produce one of the lexicographical masterpieces of all time—*A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English from the Fifteenth Century to the Present Day.*[1] I don't mean, of course, that Partridge began with the ludic stuff, but that a man interested in slang must be interested in word-play, because that's what slang is. To set the chronological record straight, the *Dictionary* first appeared in 1937, though fresh addenda have appeared periodically since, and the book on comic alphabets came out in 1961. In other words, Partridge fulfils the traditional usage of going out to play after going out to work. But the work still goes on: nothing changes more quickly than colloquial speech, and the task of keeping the *Dictionary* up-to-date is very large. A host of voluntary and unsolicited helpers

[1] Routledge, £6 6s.

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sends in new slang, new etymologies, modifications in the definitions of old slang, and Partridge's work is cut out dealing with the daily postbag.

I SAID ABOVE THAT slang is word-play, but we have to think in terms less of pastime—charades and puzzles—than of anthropology. Lévi-Strauss has helped us to see the connection between primitive word-play or riddles and banned degrees of marital relationship in primitive societies. Oedipus had to get a riddle right before committing incest, and the same conflation of riddle and incest is to be found in the folklore of the Algonquin and Iroquois tribes. A prescribed system of phonemic substitution (on the analogy of Cockney back-slang) is in regular use as part of the courtship rituals of certain of the tribes of the Philippines, and this has to do with the element of conventional disguise which always appears when there is the prospect of marriage between members of the same family. British slang is concerned with maintaining a sort of endogamy: this comes out in, for instance, public-school slang: if you can't use it, you're an outsider. Cockney back-slang emphasises the gap between vendor and buyer: "*Some delo nocab for the delo woc*" shows who is on which side of the grocer's counter. The point about rhyming-slang is less the rhyme, for the rhyme gives the clue, than what precedes the rhyme: to call a girl a richard assumes a rhyme between *Richard the Third* and *bird*, but the rhyme is the unspoken solution to a deliberate near-mystery. All this is, I think, of immense sociological interest.

One thing for which Partridge has never been sufficiently praised is his candid erudition in dealing with the so-called taboo words—unconventional English (*i.e.* not to be used in classrooms or legislative chambers) rather than true slang. The *Dictionary* proper (the big 1937 book which is always being modified by the thinner appendices) had to present these words with asterisks, but the permissiveness that came in with the *Lady Chatterley* victory has enabled Partridge to spell things out in the latest appendix. The freedom with which English interchanges parts of speech is beautifully demonstrated in the articles on *fuck*, though I think Partridge still has to parse the word in statements like "So he stood there fuck in the middle of the parade-ground."

More than anything, it is the painstaking digging for etymologies that must be admired, and when digging yields nothing, the imaginative flash that blinds the pedant. Sometimes Partridge fails to satisfy, but nobody else could either. Thus, *ackermaracker* is a low term for tea, first noted about 1920, and still sometimes

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heard among older lorry-drivers. Where does it come from? Partridge suggests substitution of a back-stop for a front one, so that *tea* becomes *kea*, then back-slang *aek*, then a reduplication process with rhythmical decorations. This does not really work, but what could? Most of our obscenities have the most noble etymologies, but Partridge, rejecting Grose's *quemar* (Spanish: to burn) as the origin of *quim*, does not do much better with his Celtic *cwm*—a cleft, a valley. The real clue surely comes in his article on *cunt*, with its radical *cu* for "quintessential physical femineity" and the cow as a sacred animal. Certainly, *queen* and *quim* seem to be cognate, and we see this more clearly in the hive (or with the Elizabethan *quean*—prostitute) than in the presence chamber.

IF I GIVE THE IMPRESSION that Partridge's work has lain chiefly among dirty words, that is because he is most notable among British philologists for a total lack of squeamishness and a throughly healthy relish for the tongue of the common man. To look through his list of published works, a very formidable one, is to see that all aspects of the living language interest him equally, and "living" does not necessarily mean "contemporary": his key to Swift's *Polite Conversations* (1957) is a classic of witty and courteous exegesis. He has done good work on the so-called "literary" language, but he is happiest with what is rarely recorded in literature—the demotic poetry that turns the penis into "old blind Bob" and makes rude boys on bicycles ask girls if they like bananas and cream.

A book that has just been reprinted does triumphantly what Partridge seems best qualified to do—namely, show the good coarse roots of the common man in a writer so uncommon as to suffer from the rarefaction of his adulators. The writer is Shakespeare and the book is *Shakespeare's Bawdy*.[2] As Edmund Wilson said, reviewing the book when it first appeared in America, "the timidity or the ignorance of the academic approach to Shakespeare has left some large and awkward gaps in textual elucidation. Falstaff at Mistress Quickly's and Katharine of France learning English have been made to seem even more scandalous through being thrown into naked relief by the commentators' sudden silence. . . ." What was always needed was a book that would kill prurience in the egg, and enable even schoolboys to control their

[2] Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy*. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 35s., paperback 14s.)

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sniggers. The image of a Shakespeare as "Freudian" as Henry James (whose Roderick Hudson embarrassingly "swings his tool") is still common in the classroom. Partridge's introductory essay and exhaustive glossary show that Shakespeare encloses Freud as he encloses everybody else. He always knew what he was doing.

Partridge sees, rightly, that in Shakespeare "the nexus between the sexual act and literary creation is closer, more potent, more subtly psychosomatic than in any other writer, whether of verse or prose." His very name is a sort of sexual banner: the spear-shaking is obvious, but the *Will* has its own richness, signifying not only libido in general but also passionate sexual desire in immediate encounters, standing also for both the penis and what Partridge has always called the female pudend. Take the following sonnet:

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy Will,
And Will to boot, and Will in overplus,
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine?
Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store;
So thou, being rich in Will, add to thy Will
One will of mine, to make thy large Will more.
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

The *Will* in the first two lines presents the entire complex—Shakespeare himself as desirous lover, lust, the sexual organs. The fourth and fifth lines have *will* as pudend (to keep Partridge's term); in the sixth *will* is the penis. The next three *wills* seem to signify desire, and the last four are the organs again—one penis among three pudends—though the final *Will* seems involved in a complex ambiguity like the shout of a full orchestra.

Anything that deepens our appreciation of Shakespeare and, at the same time, demonstrates both his closeness to his common audience and the driving forces of his inner life, is to be welcomed greatly. *Shakespeare's Bawdy* is, like Hotson's *First Night of Twelfth Night* and G. B. Harrison's *Shakespeare at Work*, a book that turns scholarship into a human joy. Partridge's diamond jubilee is aptly toasted in this reissue, though, I repeat, it should have been marked by more than publisher's honours. Perhaps there is time enough for a wider acknowledgment of his achievements. He is fit, upright, lively, hard at work. Philology seems to keep a man young.

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The Smashers

By Maurice Cranston

PENGUIN BOOKS have brought out a selection[1] from the speeches made at the Congress on the Dialectics of Liberation (held at the Round House in Chalk Farm in July 1967), edited by one of the organisers, Dr. David Cooper. This Penguin is fairly short, but the speeches may be heard *in extenso* on twenty-three long-playing, not to say long-winded, records for £30. The Congress must clearly be reckoned a success, if only in bringing together the diverse elements of New Left thought and fashionable progressive sentiment.

The speakers at the Congress appear at first sight to be an ill-assorted company. There is Allen Ginsburg, that beguiling champion of non-violence and love. There is Stokely Carmichael, handsome and agreeably young, an equally arresting advocate of violence and hate. Then there is the finicky German voice of Herbert Marcuse grumbling about the workers of North America being rich, and John Gerassi, a former editor of *Time* magazine, complaining about the workers of South America being poor. There are some vigorous attacks, in the spirit of Rousseau and Ruskin, on the horrors of industrialisation, and various echoes of Aldous Huxley's theory that drugs can expand men's minds.

However, it is the nature of dialectic (as dialectic is understood in Left-wing circles) to reconcile antitheses so that any contradiction one might detect between the principles put forward by different speakers, or by the same speaker at different stages of his own argument, can be treated as the potential elements of a Higher Synthesis. The process is enlivened by the incantation of words like "imperialism," "rape of Viet Nam," "organisational capitalism," "bourgeois repression" and "liberation," with which this book is generously peppered.

The best speech is nevertheless the least dialectical; it is Stokely Carmichael's statement of the objectives of the Black Power movement, and this could not be more plainly Aristotelian in its logic; white is separated totally and absolutely from black. The aim of Black Power, Mr. Carmichael explains, is to "smash" the "system of international white supremacy coupled with international capitalism." He adds: "And people who see themselves as part of that system are going to be smashed with it—or we're going to be smashed."

Mr. Carmichael is commendably frank in admitting that this talk of "smashing" means real violence. It is justified, he claims, because the white races have themselves introduced violence: "I don't understand how the white West can talk against violence. They are the most violent people on the face of the earth. They have used violence to get everything they have." Mr. Carmichael protests that the black people have tried "for the past four hundred years to coexist" in the United States, but it "has been of no avail.... We are now being shot down like dogs in the street by white racist policemen. We can no longer accept this oppression without retribution." Mr. Carmichael admits that it is not possible for "black people to take over the whole country militarily," but he points out that the industrial and commercial heart of the nation is in the great cities.

> *We* [black people] are in the cities. We can become and are becoming a disruptive force in the flow of services, goods and capital. While we disrupt internally and aim for the eye of the octopus, we are hoping that our brothers are disrupting externally to sever the tentacles of the United States.

Mr. Carmichael explains why, under his leadership, the American Student Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee, the SNCC, has, while retaining the title, both abandoned the doctrine of non-violence and ousted white liberals from membership: "No white liberal," he writes, "can give me anything. The only thing a white liberal can do for me is to help civilise other whites, because they need to be civilised." He even goes so far as to suggest that the white liberal desire for racial integration rests on unconscious racism, namely, on the patronising belief that white Americans ought to *accept* the black people, instead of asking whether the black people want to accept the white.

> The integration movement has never been able to involve the black proletariat. It could never attract and hold the young bloods who clearly understood the savagery of white America and who were ready to meet it with armed resistance. It is the young bloods who contain especially the hatred that Che Guevara speaks of when he says, and I quote: "Hatred is an element of the struggle...."

Mr. Carmichael next develops a kind of neo-Marxism in which a concept of Race takes the place of Marx's own concept of Class:

> Our analysis is one that begins in race. Colour and culture were, and are, key factors in our oppression. Therefore our history and our economic analysis are rooted in these concepts.

[1] *The Dialectics of Liberation*. Edited by DAVID COOPER. Penguin Books, 5s.

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Thus, instead of Marx's proletariat of working men, Mr. Carmichael proclaims the existence of a proletariat of coloured men which has the mission of overthrowing not the bourgeoisie, but "white western society."

Evidently in the discussion which followed Mr. Carmichael's paper someone must have made the obvious point that he was putting forward a *racist* doctrine; for we find Dr. Cooper in his final essay invoking the dialectical method to deny this assertion. There is "nothing racist" about Mr. Carmichael's argument, he claims, "because there is only a contingent but not a necessary identity of white power and imperialism." Hence, Dr. Cooper concludes, Mr. Carmichael's position is not "a sort of counter-racism," but "the passionate recognition . . . that the position of black people in the U.S.A. is a relation of direct continuity with the condition of the people in the Third World struggling towards their liberation." But Dr. Cooper is surely less than fair to Mr. Carmichael in thus reducing a vigorous thesis to an innocuous platitude.

Mr. Carmichael's argument seems to me to be an imprudent one, alarming and morally wrong; but he has at least the existentialist virtues of authenticity and lucidity, and it is no kindness to him to make out that he does not mean what he says. Dr. Cooper's own contributions are decidedly opaque, despite his use of fashionably rude words like "fuck" and "shit" to explain his view of mankind's present predicament. What he seems to be saying is that we are all oppressed (not only the black people) by the existing social structures. He pleads accordingly for a re-structuring of all our institutions, including "family, school, university, mental hospital, factory." Unfortunately, Dr. Cooper does not say what he would wish to put in the place of these existing institutions. He seems to feel that one has only to get rid of what we have for something better to spring up spontaneously. He speaks of removing "mystification," but does not show where true knowledge is to be found.

Dr. R. D. Laing's paper is a rather more elegant statement of similar sentiments. Neither individual salvation nor the seizure of the state, he says, is the kind of revolutionary change that is needed. Salvation lies rather in "sudden, structural, radical qualitative changes in the intermediate system levels: changes in a factory, a hospital, a school, a university, a set of schools, or a whole area of industry, medicine, education, etc." Even so, Dr. Laing is somewhat less hopeful than is Dr. Cooper about finding the knowledge that is to save mankind.

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> There is almost nothing we *can* know about the total world social system, or any of the systems for several levels down from there. But it is possible to know that we cannot so know....

On this healthily sceptical note, Dr. Laing's paper ends; the only curious feature is that he himself, in earlier paragraphs, claims to know quite a lot about the world system we live under. He says that in Viet Nam, for example, millions of peasants are fighting for their own land on the one side while, on the other, "mercenaries, well-paid, well-fed, steel-trained specialists in the technology of killing" are out "to destroy all forms of life over a sector of the earth's surface." How, on his own showing Dr. Laing can "know" this any more than other people can "know" that in Viet Nam American soldiers are heroically supporting the defensive war of the South against Communist aggression, it is impossible to say.

Dreams of Heaven . . .

The Round House, Chalk Farm

ON TUESDAY MORNING, *the lack of communication was compounded still further by Stokely Carmichael's apparent inability to have a direct face-to-face conversation with anyone who happened to disagree with him on the question of black-white relationships and the violence/counter-violence syndrome. Carmichael is a charismatic speaker. His interpretation of Black Power is exactly correct, his analysis of what has been done to the Negro and the coloured people of the Third World is radical and acute (though not very original, deriving largely from Che Guevara and Frantz Fanon), and every white man should listen to what he is saying and try to understand, if only for his own good.*

In the final analysis, however, I do not think that the man is authentic. Especially when he read from his prepared notes, he began to sound like a machine, and as he neared the end of his speech the mindless slogans ("we're gonna burn the system to the ground") seemed to take over and gain control, so that he slid into stupid demagoguery.

From demagoguery he went into nearly incoherent rage as questions began to come up from the floor that challenged his fundamental assumptions. Despite his self-professed determination to talk, not about the individual, but about groups and organisations and mass resistance and the building up of "revolutionary black consciousness," Carmichael is finally not a political man. He interprets the world, not just partially, but totally *through his own wounded resentment at "the goddam white man." The result is frantic abstractions ("black guerrilla warfare throughout the West") and a fight for petty victories and spite, which are not political propositions, though they are good for the soul. On this evidence, at least, precisely the biggest trouble with Carmichael* is *his charisma and the fact that he seems to* love *his charisma. It is the psychology of explosive apocalypse, of "burn, baby, burn," and it is frankly terrifying in its drift towards nihilism.*

MY OWN FEELING *is that Carmichael is wishing, consciously or unconsciously, for catastrophe, and is actively working to bring it about. The longing for a blow-up occurs in people who are so enmeshed in a frustrating system that they have no vitality apart from it: and their vitality in it is explosive rage. In my experience, very few American Negroes are so psychologically committed to the dominant social system that they need its total destruction and consequently lust for Armageddon. They have dreams of heaven but not of hellfire. A few exemplary burnings and lootings serve to mollify their natural desire for vengeance for the time being. Their intellectual leaders, however, who are verbally and willy-nilly psychologically enmeshed in the hated system, find it necessary to be more apocalyptic.*

In other words, contrary to his own claims, Carmichael takes his values and his definitions of violence ready-made from the dominant white society, precisely because he has no alternative values to offer. Just as he mislabels all the victims "black," so he mislabels all the executioners "white." He should know by now that the authority which pertains throughout man's society is not an authority of race but an institutionalised authority of property and arms. He should know, too, that the life-denying evil inheres in the nature *of that authority and not in the colour of its functionaries or agents. If he wanted change he would speak change. Instead, he confines himself to a fantasy so absolute in its rejection that it amounts finally to little more than business as usual, the other side of the white liberal coin. That hectic rage, so resonant in its anger—partly real, partly manufactured—is not going to effect any really deep qualitative change. Still, there it is: people like myself, who have been pacifist and anti-state for years, have not got much to show him for our efforts.*

I have dealt with Carmichael at some length, not simply because he is important for the wrong reasons, but because he seemed to set the tone for the greater part of the proceedings at this congress. There was precious little dialogue after his tirade, and he contributed almost nothing towards the "demystification" of all forms of human violence which was the ostensible purpose of the congress. If anything, violence was more mystifying and canonised than ever by the time he sat down....

THERE WAS A MAJOR *"ideological" split among the participants. On the one hand, we had a majority composed of militant political activists who seek*

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But of course it is not the reality of events in Viet Nam that matters to the Round House *congressistes*, but the myth, a myth that provides a vicarious outlet for aggression as well as a simplified story (no matter how false) to appease the bewilderment of puzzled minds. A matter of greater substance is the point which is made by both Dr. Cooper and Dr. Laing about Revolution taking place at "intermediate system levels" such as universities (which they both mention). For here we have a glimpse of the theory that lies behind much of the so-called "student" activism which has been taking place in recent months. Marx, of course, was impatient of such adventures; but the New Left has forsaken Marx's hope of the working class' seizure of the state, and now seeks instead to revolutionise smaller institutions by the action of a different kind of "proletariat."

Anyone curious about the intentions behind the recent stormy events at the L.S.E. and elsewhere would do well to consult this book, and to reflect on the doctrines of violence and social "transformation" which are expounded here. There is still a widespread belief that all university disturbances are sparked off by "student grievances," whereas many of them are part of a systematic campaign, inspired by New Left theory and carried out by New Left zealots in Senior as well as Junior Common Rooms, which aims at destroying the traditional "bourgeois authoritarian" universities and setting up in their place free centres of Student Power. Dr. Cooper suggests in his preface that the Round House Conference was "really the founding event of the Anti-university of London." It may also be seen as a key event in the current project of overthrowing the existing University of London.

. . . & Hellfire

to ally themselves with "historical forces," who wish to hook up the radical movements in the West with violent revolutionary colonial movements throughout the Third World, and whose understanding of the clear and distinct outlines of decaying capitalism is pretty solidly Marxist in its orientation. On the other hand, we had a small minority composed of the much more "existential" social psychologists and artists who are concerned with problems of consciousness, power corruption, excessive urbanisation, alienating technology, ecological balance, the liberatory potentialities of art, knowledge, education, contemplation, and in general with the perennial question of how people liberate themselves.

I suppose that my own prejudices on this split are by now fairly clear. Certainly, the militant Marxists, whether revisionists or orthodox, perceive what the main problems are, but I doubt that they have much to say to us in our modern conditions, so far as the possibilities for reconstruction are concerned. They do not seem to pause for a moment to consider the dismal record of attempts to take control of institutions, and they somewhat conveniently forget that so many angry but earnest reformers in our time have been corrupted and done in by the demon of power, their visions twisted or discarded. This is not to say that institutional changes are irrelevant but that they are insufficient. At best, they constitute the necessary though not sufficient cause of the Good Life: at worst, they are a snare and a delusion. Frankly, I found it dismaying and profoundly disheartening to hear speakers like John Gerassi and Ernest Mandel and Carmichael talking about or implying the necessity for organised terrorism, co-ordinated sabotage, and discriminatory violence throughout the affluent West, for they do not sound like normal grown men when they pontificate in this manner. They should come to their senses and realise that their proposals will get us nowhere except the mass grave. As for "historical forces," I sometimes think that these are rationalisations invented by the oppressed to confirm their impotence.

***Roger Barnard**, an Editor of* PEACE NEWS, *in his report on* "The Dialectics of Liberation Conference" (July 1967), in NEW SOCIETY (London).

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Central European Flash-back

By Hugh Seton-Watson

NINETEEN SIXTY-EIGHT was a dramatic year in Central Europe. It began with the overthrow of Novotny; in the spring came the student demonstrations in Warsaw and the upsurge of Czech and Slovak liberty; in the autumn, invasion by the heirs of the Tsars and the Khans, accompanied by their Polish, Prussian and other vassals. It was also a year of anniversaries. Fifty years before, the Habsburg Monarchy broke in pieces, and the republic of Thomas Masaryk was founded. Twenty years later that republic was partitioned at Munich by agreement between its enemies and its allies. Ten years after that, the satraps who ruled the Czechoslovak Communist Party took over the country, and Jan Masaryk, the son of Thomas, was found dead below an open window in the Czernin Palace. In this same year the blockade of Berlin began.

Most men and women in Central Europe, even those with a sparse formal education, are perforce aware of their history, whose triumphs and tragedies reach back far beyond 1918. As I have been associated with Central Europe all my adult life, and my father for thirty years before that, and as I have spent a good deal of the last twenty years studying the modern history of Russia, I too am aware of these things. Past and present chase each other through the mind, like some cinema flash-back in the worst of taste. Unfortunately, all the scenes on this film were real.

THE WARSAW STUDENTS' PROTEST in March 1968 began because the government had banned a dramatisation by the National Theatre of the poem *Dziady* by Adam Mickiewicz. This work was written under the influence of the Polish Rising of 1830, and is full of anti-Russian passion. In a poem published at the end of the Third Part of *Dziady,* entitled "To My Moscow Friends," the Polish poet recalls his own years in Russia and the friends he made. One was the poet Ryleev, a revolutionary who was the most active of the St. Petersburg insurgents of 14 December 1825, and one of the five who were condemned to death. Remembering his friend, Mickiewicz wrote: "*A curse on a people which murders its own prophets....*"

Mickiewicz had also been a friend of Pushkin, and used to belong to the same circle in the Russian capital. But Pushkin in 1830 placed himself at the head of the chorus of Russian chauvinists. In his poem "To the Slanderers of Russia" he thundered against the Poles and their foreign friends. The Russo-Polish war was a dispute between Slavs, in which outsiders had no concern. "Will the Slav streams flow together into the Russian sea? Or will that sea dry up? That is the question." To Mickiewicz, Pushkin was a traitor to all their common cherished beliefs. "Perhaps one of you," he wrote in the "Diversion" to *Dziady*, "has for ever abandoned the freedom of his soul to the favour of the Tsar... glorifies his triumph with venal tongue, and comforts himself with the martyrdom of his friends." This was less than fair to Pushkin, whose poem "From the Depths of the Siberian Mines" (not, of course, publishable in 1831) was a tribute to the Decembrist martyrs. There was also found in Pushkin's papers, after his death, an incomplete poem addressed to an unknown friend, a Russian who had grieved over the fall of Warsaw to the Russians. It contains the words: "You sobbed bitterly, as the Jew sobbed over Jerusalem...."

Poland and Russia have come a long way since Pushkin and Mickiewicz were *frères ennemis*. From the time of Kosciuszko onwards, Polish soldiers were often to be found on battlefields where the freedom of nations was held to be at stake. Their proud slogan, learned by every Polish child to the present day, was "For our liberty and yours! (*za naszą i waszą wolność*)." In 1918, thanks partly to their own brave efforts and partly to the fantastic good fortune that the German and Russian empires collapsed within a few months of each other, the Poles recovered their national independence. Unfortunately, it cannot be said that the new rulers of Poland treated Polish peasants or workers, not to mention Ukrainians or Jews, very much better than the Tsars had done. As for the Polish army, twenty years after independence had been won, it was ordered to enter neighbouring Czechoslovakia, in support of the policies of the *Führer* of the Third Reich, Adolf Hitler. It is true that Poland had a strong claim to a piece of Czechoslovak territory, but its action, to say the least, was ill-timed. It is also true that within less than a year the people of Poland were paying rather a high price for this success.

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For nearly two years Poland reverted to its earlier role of helpless object and theatre of German-Russian cooperation. In 1849 at the Russian frontier running through Poland, the Saxon government had handed over Michael Bakunin to the Tsar's police. In 1940 at other frontier posts in the middle of Poland, the Soviet security police handed over to the *Gestapo* numbers of German and other European anti-fascists. About the same time, the Soviet government ordered something which Tsar Nicholas I would never have permitted: at least four thousand Polish officers, taken prisoner by the Soviet army as they were retreating before the German invasion, were shot in the back of the neck in Russian prisoner-of-war camps. Even after Hitler had invaded Russia, a sort of negative German-Russian cooperation remained as far as Poles were concerned. When the people of Warsaw rose against the Germans in August 1944, the Soviet army waited on the east bank of the Vistula. Only when the Germans had reduced Warsaw to rubble, and massacred or deported its citizens, did the Soviet army resume its advance.

In 1945 the Fifth Partition of Poland was not restored. Instead, an ethnically homogeneous Polish state was set up, and shifted several hundreds of miles westwards (at the expense of eight million Germans expelled from their homes). This new Poland was at first little more than a province of the Russian Soviet Empire. In 1956, however, the Polish Communist Government, under Wladyslaw Gomulka, obtained effective internal sovereignty. Unfortunately, as in the case of the Polish Republic between the wars, it cannot be said that Poland became a happy land. It is true that the peasants have fared better under Gomulka than under the eastern satrap Bierut: the gains of other classes and social groups are more questionable. As for the Polish army, it was at last given a task to perform in August 1968. Side by side with their friends the Russians and the Prussians, the Polish soldiers marched into Czechoslovakia to impose censorship and to deprive Czechs and Slovaks of their liberty. It only remains for Gomulka to demonstrate how far Poland has advanced since Kosciuszko's time by formally adopting the slogan "for our enslavement and yours (*za naszą i waszą niewolę*). . . ."

PLUS ÇA CHANGE. . . . Pushkin told the Western nations that they had no business to meddle in a dispute between Slavs: Brezhnev's spokesmen say that the invasion of Czechoslovakia is an internal matter for the "socialist camp." Pushkin feared that if all the Slav streams did not flow into the Russian sea, the sea would dry up: Brezhnev that if any "socialist" state adopted institutions different from his own, then his régime and those of his satraps would be in danger.

A hundred and forty-two years after the Decembrists rebelled on the Senate Square in St. Petersburg, and five men were hanged for treason, five people appeared on the Red Square in Moscow to protest against the invasion of Czechoslovakia. They have got off more lightly than Ryleev. This time Russia has not murdered its prophets, only exiled them for three to five years. Admittedly, they had committed no armed rebellion. They are more comparable with Pushkin's unknown Polonophile, weeping for Prague instead of Warsaw—"as the Jew sobbed over Jerusalem." The parallel is apt, for one of the five, the poetess Gorbanevskaya, has described how the security policemen who arrested and beat them called them "dirty Yids."

Pushkin grieved for the Decembrists. In his famous poem he wrote:

> "your toil and sorrow, your thoughts fixed on lofty aims, shall not go wasted." The prison bars would break, he ended, "and freedom shall receive you joyful at the gate, and your brothers shall give you back your sword."

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Foreword by David Pryce-Jones

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But Pushkin was wrong. Their efforts were vain, and no one gave them back their sword. Some years later the young Herzen and Ogaryov, standing on the Sparrow Hills overlooking Moscow, swore to avenge the Decembrists. They spent their lives in planning revolution, but vengeance was not theirs. Nearly a half-century after Herzen's death came the greatest of those human cataclysms which from time to time occur in the history of Russia. It is as if the tears and sweat of generation after generation of untold millions of exploited and tormented Russian men and women had flowed together into vast deep lakes, and in the end the lakes overflowed, and the whole land was flooded. The flood brings wonderful utopian hopes and joys, but it does not last long. When the waters subside, autocracy is back again.

The first Red autocrat chastised the Russians with whips, his successor with scorpions. Then came the hordes of Antichrist, and the tormented *kolkhozniks* and forced labourers put on their uniforms, and fought for those who chastised them with the same fatalism and the same heroism as the tormented serfs of 1812 had fought for the Tsar and the serf-owners against the earlier Antichrist from Corsica. And when the soil of Holy Russia was clear of the invaders, on they went to impose the yoke of their tormentors on other peoples too. In 1945 they bravely fought the Germans out of Budapest, leaving it in ruins. Behind them came the security policemen, and within a couple of years the liberated Hungarians were getting to know the fake trials, kidnappings, torture-chambers, and pseudocracy (government by lie) that are modern Russia's special contribution to world civilisation. Some years later the Hungarians overthrew the satraps who tormented them on behalf of the rulers of Russia, and back came the Russian soldiers. By this time Budapest had arisen from its ruins. The second Russian occupation was materially less damaging than the first, but morally more frightful. In 1945 the Hungarians, after years of war and hardship following on years of hardship and war following on decades of misgovernment by a selfish landowning class, were exhausted and willing to accept almost anything. In 1956 they saw freedom and dignity within their reach, for a few days they grasped them, and then they were crushed again. Twelve years later they saw their small army sent to deprive the Czechs and Slovaks of liberty, as allies of the Russians and Prussians who together had destroyed their own capital city, and of the Poles who had once helped them to fight for their liberty.

For the Russian people there is no question of liberty, to raise difficult moral problems, or trouble the conscience. Slaves and enslavers they have always been: no other role could seem conceivable to them.

> "I find in Russia two classes: the slaves of the sovereign and the slaves of the landowners.... The interest of the nobility is that the peasants should be in their unlimited power; the interest of the peasants is that the nobility should be in the same degree of dependence on the throne."

The writer was Speransky, in 1802. *Plus ça change*....For "sovereign" read "party leaders," and for "landowners," *"apparatchiks,"* and for "peasants," "people," and the sentence would describe the Russia of today. The party leaders are sometimes unsure of themselves, and in recent times they have sometimes been divided: the Tsars were often weak men, and their advisers were often divided. Yet in both cases the autocratic power has been decisive, and in both cases the autocratic power has considered it the sum of political wisdom to play the middle against the lower levels. When the masses become restive, the élite is encouraged to squeeze them dry; when the élite gets a taste for liberty, the masses are brought in to knock the nonsense out of them. When necessary the roles are varied or reversed: slaves can become enslavers, and when they have done their duty they revert to slavery.

AND YET THERE IS ALSO another tradition in Russian history, another human type, for which the only possible word is saint. These were men and women who served the truth, as they saw it, and gave their lives for it, without thought of worldly reward and often without thought of changing the temporal order of things. Such people have existed in most nations, but there were perhaps more of them, and their spirit burned perhaps more purely in Russia than in other lands. There were the saints of Kiev Rus, and the saints of the Schism and the religious sects of more recent times. Something of the spirit of the saints was inherited by a section of the secular intelligentsia and even of the revolutionary movement. These were of course concerned with the temporal order. Yet there is in the history of the revolutionary movement, despite a certain overlapping zone, a recognisable distinction between the two types of the saint and the destroyer, between those who gave their lives to the passion for truth and justice, and those whom hatred and ambition drove to smash all around them and to erect their own power on the ruins. The second type was more likely to make a success of revolutionary politics, and its supreme example was Lenin. But the first type was also

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to be found, among the Populists and even among the Marxists. In more recent times the type of the saint, who bears witness for truth at all costs, has reappeared in Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn, and in a somewhat more political form in Pavel Litvinov, Larissa Daniel, and their fellow-sufferers.

The saintly tradition has never had the slightest effect on politics, but its influence may be seen in literature and art. However, one of the special skills of Russian rulers, especially in the Soviet period, has been to exploit the glories of literature and music for their own purposes. Pushkin and Tolstoy, dead, are used to bolster the prestige of rulers who reached power by the Great Terror in which ten million Russians perished. Brilliant violinists and ballet-dancers are unable to prevent themselves from being used as instruments for the moral and political disarmament of their masters' potential rivals or victims.

All nations, of course, have had and have their liars and their hypocrites. But the lie has become in Soviet Russia the greatest and most efficient of the national industries. The oppression and humiliation of millions of men and women co-exists with the incantation, from millions of bureaucratic throats, of empty moralising slogans. This obscene combination, on this scale, is peculiar to the Soviet régime. A prophetic glimpse can be found in the great novel by the 19th-century satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin, *The Golovyov Family*. The central figure, the unforgettable Yudushka, compared to whom Tartuffe and Uriah Heep are as the Chevalier Bayard, had the habit of reciting moral clichés in the face of the misfortunes of others, including his own son whom he allowed to die without lifting a finger. The whole mechanism of publicity in the Soviet Union, from Leningrad to Yakutsk, is staffed by hundreds of thousands of little Yudushka Golovyovs.

Aus der Welt die Freiheit verschwunden ist
Man sieht nur Herren und Knechte
Die Falschheit herrscht, die Hinterlist
Bei dem feigen Menschengeschlechte.

THE MUNICH AGREEMENT has been the subject of speeches, books, and articles covering thousands of square miles of paper, and no doubt more are to come. Let us leave aside the subtleties of diplomatic history. Two things remain most strongly in my mind. The first is the effect on the Czech people. By Munich they were cheated out of the right to fight for their country, and this bit deep into them. The same thing happened to them in 1948 and again in 1968, and nobody can say what the consequences of these three experi-

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ences will be. The second thing is the effect on my own generation. By this I mean those persons in their early 20s who were politically conscious, not only in England but in other countries of Europe. Those who are too young to remember, and those who did not then care one way or the other about politics, will be unable to understand how we felt in 1938, and therefore unable to understand the peculiar horror for us of the events of 21 August 1968.

I had spent the summer of 1938 partly in Czechoslovakia and partly in Yugoslavia. When in Czechoslovakia I had been to an area of German population. By this time, of course, the majority of the Germans of Czechoslovakia had been roused into fascist hysteria by Hitler's agents. But there were others. I shall never forget them, and I do not believe that they deserve to be forgotten. I have found some pages I wrote, after Munich, and I quote part of them because they have the flavour of the time. The article was entitled "Sacrifice Unexampled," and began:

> Mr Chamberlain has shown, we are told, a capacity for sacrifice unexampled in history. He has sacrificed half the resources of a friendly state, its coal, glass, textiles, radium. He has sacrificed the living of thousands of Czechs, dependent directly or indirectly on lost industries. He has sacrificed its defences. . . . He has sacrificed half a million German democrats and a million Czechs, condemned to choose between German civilisation and starvation in Prague or in exile.
>
> Last July I lived with some of these Germans in Western Bohemia. My host was a schoolteacher. His wife taught in another small town, separated by four hours of railway-journey in each direction. They only saw each other at week-ends. During the week they taught, the only democratic members of their staff, children kept hysterical by parents, relatives and friends; tried to prevent them kicking little Jews. Insulted and cheated by their colleagues, threatened by their neighbours, even by children who showed them the lamp-posts from which they would be hung when He should come, they never deserted their principles. Their daily work finished, they began their party activity, wrote articles and pamphlets, visited members, addressed meetings.
>
> At four o'clock one morning I rose to come by special train to Pilsen with 300 Social Democratic workmen, for a meeting with the Czech party. The Germans marched from one end of the town, the Czechs from the other, and converged on the main square, where speeches were held. The streets were lined with Czech citizens sometimes ten deep, and as we passed they shouted, "Long live our German friends." And the Germans answered, "Long live the Republic."
>
> Such enthusiasm these Germans had never known. Many of them wept. For a year they had lived under terrorism and hate, and they had not lost their courage. Jaksch said to me, "It did them good. For one day they have lived among human beings." But Lord Runciman told Mr. Chamberlain that Mr. Hitler had told him that Germans and Czechs cannot live together in one state. And of course Mr. Hitler knows.

The self-fulfilling prophecies of Mr. Chamberlain and the other gentlemen proved right. After taking the German provinces, Hitler took the Czech lands as well, and for the next six years he oppressed and insulted the Czech people. It was the educated Czechs, and especially the intellectual professions, who suffered most, and it was Germans from the Bohemian borderlands who did most of the denunciation, arresting, torturing and killing. When Hitler's *Reich* collapsed, the Czechs took a horrible revenge. A million Germans fled from Bohemia, and two million more were expelled, often in inhuman conditions. Thousands perished in the process—how many, no one really knows. Among those expelled were many who had resisted Hitler's agents and been loyal to the Republic. Officially, these loyal German democrats were supposed to be well treated, and allowed to stay in the Republic if they wished. In practice the distinction was usually ignored. One reason was that a very high proportion of those educated Czechs who best understood the Germans, and most genuinely believed in the need for friendship between free Czechs and free Germans, had perished at the hands of Hitler's butchers, and that a large number of those Czechs responsible for the expulsions were peasants or workers who had lived rather comfortably under the occupation, and now sought to prove their patriotism by bullying defenceless Germans. In any case, a tremendous volume of hatred had been created on both sides, and in the following twenty years the Soviet leaders did all they could to exploit it for their own ends. Yet in recent years personal relationships have been built between Czechs and Germans, particularly between young people. It is very doubtful whether the familiar clichés about undying German-Czech hatred are still valid.

My 1938 article continued:

> Mr. Chamberlain's friends are right. Such sacrifices, such peace, such honour were never known in Britain. Such achievements have their price. Our generation will pay it. First the young Czechs, faced with ruin, social collapse and "salvation from Bolshevism." Then my Yugoslav friends, young men and women who have fought for nine years a cruel tyranny, who have hoped, studied and worked for freedom, and were

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within sight of victory when their friends stabbed them in the back. German civilisation is on the march to the East.

First come the bombing aeroplanes and the soldiers. Then follow the secret police, the informers and the race-experts. Little notices are posted up—*Juden sind unerwünscht.* A husband does not return to his wife one evening; after three weeks a neat parcel arrives, the urn containing his ashes. Last of all come the bosses and their bodyguards, and the Leader thanks God—a brilliant second—for the mission entrusted to him.

Well, my generation paid the price all right. Peace did not even last out Mr. Chamberlain's time. It was my Yugoslav friends who paid the highest price. It was precisely the Belgrade students and young graduates, with whom I had spent so much of my time in 1938, who formed the cadres of Tito's army of liberation. Some of them survived. Among those who did not, I remember especially "Lola" Ribar, the student leader, and Veselin Masleša, a Montenegrin economist, both communists and both outstanding human beings.

BUT THE PASSAGE I HAVE QUOTED has a sinister topicality. For "Bolshevism" read "counter-revolution"; for "German," "Soviet"; and for "East," "West," and most of the first paragraph could refer to 1968. The second paragraph is admittedly less relevant. There are no race-experts in the Soviet security police. Hitler did the job of extermination too well. Even so, the Jews who survived Auschwitz and now live in Russia and Poland can hardly be envied. No doubt they should be grateful to Gomulka for not reactivating the death-camps. There is not much more to be grateful for.

Munich may have been an unavoidable tragedy: if so, only because of the negligence of governments and the folly of electors in Britain and France for ten years before it. But a tragedy it was, not only for the Czechs but for half of Europe.

This said, it must also be pointed out that in the years between 1939 and 1945 the British paid their debt to the Czechs, and paid it honourably. In this they were assisted by thousands of Czech soldiers and airmen who gave splendid service in the British forces, and returned to Czechoslovakia only to be persecuted by the new communist masters. Especially dishonest is the Soviet exploitation of Munich. In September 1938 the Soviet government was not put to the test. As France betrayed Czechoslovakia, and the League of Nations did nothing, the *casus foederis* did not arise. The Soviet

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government behaved honourably, but it neither did nor could perform miracles. A year later, when Stalin made his deal with Hitler, the Soviet government recognised the Protectorate in Bohemia-Moravia and the independent Slovak state. But Soviet propaganda for thirty years has used Munich as evidence that the Western Powers are and have always been by their very nature treacherous enemies of the Czech and Slovak peoples, whereas the Soviet Union has shown lasting disinterested friendship.

Le despotisme âpre et sans gloire
Sur les peuples découragés
Ferme la grille épaisse et noire
Des erreurs et des préjugés.

WHEN I WAS working in Rumania early in the war, I used to spend a good deal of time in one Bucharest café, where I would read the newspapers and talk politics with different people. Among the café's regular clients were two colonels whom I got to know rather well. Both were exiles from their own countries, unusually capable officers, friends of Britain and men of rather similar liberal views. Colonel Heliodor Pika had been Military Attaché of Czechoslovakia in Bucharest until Hitler marched into Prague. Since then he had placed himself at the disposal of the exiled leadership under Dr. Beneš, and was in close touch with the resistance movement under Nazi occupation. Colonel Euripides Bakirdzis had a distinguished record in the Greek army in the Balkan Wars and First World War, and held a British D.S.O. As a Venizelist, he had been involved in the short civil war of 1935, and could not live in Greece under General Metaxas.

When Rumania became allied to Hitler, Pika went to Turkey. Later he was sent by Beneš to Moscow as head of the Czechoslovak military mission in the Soviet Union. His superior, the Czechslovak Minister in Moscow, was Zdeněk Fierlinger, originally a social democrat whose main loyalty was now given, not to his country's President, Eduard Beneš, but to the Soviet rulers. Pika resisted all pressure from Fierlinger and from the Soviet soldiers and policemen. He remained faithful to Beneš and the exiled government, reported to them the truth as he saw it, regarded the Soviet Union as his ally but not his master, and also maintained good relations with the representatives in Moscow of his country's other allies, the British and the Americans. Bakirdzis returned to Greece when the Italians invaded, and remained there under the German occupation. He organised one of the first resistance groups, and was in secret communication with the British in the Middle East. Later, he escaped to Cairo. In 1943, when some leaders of the communist-led resistance movement EAM-ELAS came to Cairo for negotiations with the Allies, Bakirdzis returned with them to Greece. He later became a member of their provisional government in the mountains, though he never joined the Communist Party. When fighting broke out in December 1944 between ELAS and the British army, Bakirdzis was the general in command of the ELAS forces in Macedonia, but he kept them out of the fighting.

Pika, who had been promoted a General, returned to free Czechoslovakia. For two years he held an important post on the General Staff. When the Czechoslovak communists seized power in February 1948, he was arrested. Fierlinger and his Soviet masters took an ignoble revenge: he was accused of treasonable relations with the Western Powers and condemned to death. Bakirdzis returned to civilian life after the armistice agreement which ended the first Greek communist insurrection. But when a right-wing Greek government was elected in 1946, he was arrested and deported to an island. Some time later I heard it reported that he had committed suicide.

THE FATE OF THESE TWO OFFICERS, both essentially victims of judicial murder, illustrates the fate of half Europe in those years. In the early 1950s conditions somewhat improved in Greece, but in the communist countries economic exploitation and political persecution reached their climax. With the advent of John Foster Dulles, the United States began to compete with the Soviet Union in output of false promises and bombastic slogans. Yet there was also hope: the Yugoslavs stood alone and survived, the Berlin airlift worked, Frenchmen and Germans moved towards each other, and there were men in high places who had a vision of a free fraternal Europe.

A few more years, and the picture changed again. In Hungary, the workers, writers and soldiers together overthrew a totalitarian state which a few days before had seemed invincible, and its foreign masters paused in brief hesitation. At this moment, the British and French Prime Ministers launched against Egypt an invasion so devised as to minimise military speed and efficiency and to maximise political odium. While the Presidential election campaign in the United States reached its climax, the British Navy steamed slowly from Malta to Port Said, and the Secretary of State marshalled his great talents for the most effective humiliation of his allies—the Soviet tanks poured back into Budapest. While in England proletarian blimps spat forth in the pubs their futile rage against

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the Wogs, and the progressive intelligentsia took out their little anti-imperialist consciences and washed them white as snow on the floor of the House or in the columns of progressive weeklies, in Hungary workers and intellectuals faced the same Soviet hangmen.

Yet, as always happens with time, hopes revived and forces regrouped themselves. This owed little to the deeds or words of Western politicians. The only external force which helped the peoples of Central Europe to revive was the threat of China to the Soviet leaders. The Russians now could no longer give orders: they were obliged to ask politely for support, and to pay a price. The governments recovered sovereignty in their own countries, and most of them sought popularity by treating their subjects with more respect. Each in its own way, and at a different tempo, Rumania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland were re-entering European culture.

IN 1968 AGAIN THE HOPES were crushed. Thanks to the brilliant work of press and television, millions of Europeans shared the anguish, and admired the unity and courage, of Czechs and Slovaks. Never before has a great international tragedy been brought into the homes of so many, and perhaps this will have its effect. Western rulers, however, regarded it all with profound indifference. Some made a few perfunctory gestures. M. Michel Debré and Senator Eugene McCarthy did not even bother to conceal their bored contempt. The American obsession with Viet Nam worked equally against the Czechs and Slovaks from both extremes. One school seemed to hold that some great ideological crusade against "world communism" could by some miracle be won in Viet Nam and nowhere else; the other that, if Ho Chi-minh and Castro approved of the Soviet invasion, then the Czechs deserved whatever fate they got. In France, barely recovered from the virtual disintegration of the summer, the ageing neo-Charlemagne pursued his vendetta with the ghost of Roosevelt, his war against the English language, and his strange vision of some sort of Carolingian Quebec. Germans faced the prospect not only of continued partition but of certain blame, whatever they might do. Konrad Adenauer was blamed for rigidity towards the eastern neighbours: when his successors made friendly gestures towards them, they were accused of sinister subversion. Threatened by the Soviet government, vaguely patronised by the American, despised by the French, exchanging useless platitudes with the British, alarmed for their security yet fearing to be accused of neo-Nazism if they stood up for their interests, they were not to be envied.

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As for the British, their political life dominated by stale and trivial issues, their public opinion divided between bovine xenophobia and querulous self-denigration, they were in no better case.

THAT THE LAST FIFTY YEARS have seen a failure and decline of Europe is a well-worn cliché. What is so alarming is that the knowledge of this tragic process seems to paralyse the will to resist and arrest it. On the one hand there is massive defeatism, a compulsive desire to undermine every loyalty, sneer at every belief and devalue every motive. On the other hand are clouds of perfectionist rhetoric, exhortations to destroy monsters like "world communism" or "neo-colonialism," to achieve world government, to remove at a blow all differences of wealth between nations, to create a multi-racial paradise, or simply to assume on behalf of one's own nation all the guilt for all the crimes and follies of mankind. The sneerers and the myth-makers, the blimps and the masochists have this in common, that their activities combine to drive all realism out of national policy.

Yet world peace still depends on what happens at the centre of Europe. Two world wars took place because this was not understood.

IT IS DIFFICULT to restrain a revulsion of feeling in favour of the Habsburg Monarchy when one remembers the events that followed its downfall. One need only think of the history of Vienna, so long an object of love-hate to its own citizens and to countless foreigners.

My father first saw it at the end of 1905, when German, Slav, and Italian students were shouting each other down in the university; and the socialists led vast, disciplined, peaceful processions of workers through the streets demanding universal suffrage. I knew it, though much less well than he, in the 1930s, and I have been happy there again in the 1960s. It comes to mind in a series of *tableaux historiques*. *1918:* two million people haunted by starvation, thousands scouring the countryside to sell precious but useless possessions to impassive peasants for food. *February 1934:* Dollfuss orders his troops to shell blocks of workers' flats in a civil war which he provoked against the socialists. *July 1934:* the same Dollfuss bleeds to death in his own office while his Nazi murderers refuse to let him see a priest. *March 1938:* handsome young Austrian Nazis order elderly Jews to wash the pavements and kick their bottoms as they stoop down, to an accompaniment of jubilant *Sieg Heil! April 1945:* the victorious Soviet Army storms through the ruins, demonstrating by its treatment of male and female civilians the superiority of Soviet socialist over National Socialist culture. *November 1956: K-und-K* veterans, young countesses, republican bureaucrats, and socialist workers join in exhausting, patient, and effective efforts to help the tens of thousands of Hungarians pouring across the frontier. *October 1968:* the prosperous city does business as usual, but the tanks are back again, fifty miles to the north this time, and a steady trickle of Czechs and Slovaks comes in, yet another influx of former fellow-citizens from the Monarchy to be cared for.

And of course the same story could be illustrated from other cities—Budapest, Warsaw, and (with fewer material, but not fewer spiritual scars) Prague. Other horrors also spring to mind—the mutual massacres of Serbs, Croats, and Moslems in Bosnia; the cruel persecution of Ukrainians by Poles in Eastern Galicia in 1930 and the deportation of Poles from the same region by Soviet invaders after 1939; the transportation of Jews from northern Transylvania, Ruthenia and Hungary proper to Hitler's death camps at the orders of the Hungarian government in 1944.

All these things resulted from the fall of the Habsburg Monarchy: all would have been inconceivable as long as the Monarchy existed. Its disappearance left a double vacuum. The common culture, hard to define but very real and very pervasive, which had united at least the educated classes of all the nationalities, was fragmented. The military and administrative framework of a Great Power, which had protected all the Monarchy's subjects even if it had often misruled them, was dissolved. Ten nations were delivered up to their quarrels with each other, and then to the appetites of successive totalitarian conquerors from outside.

Yet to judge the events of 1918 with the knowledge of 1968 is to distort their meaning. The truth is that by 1918 the Habsburg Monarchy no longer commanded the loyalty of most of its politically conscious subjects. Admittedly many peasants and soldiers of most of its nationalities remained *kaisertreu*. Even the alienation of the politically conscious had been a long process. The only basis of legitimacy which the Monarchy offered—obedience to the Habsburg dynasty—was perfectly acceptable even in the first half of the 19th century. Until then it did not matter that, in contrast to the countries of Western and Northern Europe, no Austrian nation had been formed. The medieval kings of France never consciously set themselves the task of creating a French nation. But the ruthless suppression of the Albigeois, the taming of Brittany, Burgundy and other provinces, the creation of the centralised French state and the

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standardised French language brought about this result. Despite religious and civil strife the French became one nation.

NOTHING SIMILAR OCCURRED in Austria. The Habsburgs never became a national dynasty. Theirs was an universal empire: they were the defenders of the faith against West and East, against the heretics and the Turks. With a different policy, the Austrian lands and Bohemia might have been formed into a centralised state, and a single nation might have arisen, but no attempt was made to do this until the mid-18th century, when it was too late. The growth of cities, industries and new social classes coincided with the diffusion of the idea of nationality. In this new age the appeal to *Kaisertreue* was not a sufficient answer: a dynasty which was bound to rely on landowners, army officers and bureaucratic dignitaries could not extend the basis of its legitimacy by radical social reform.

After 1867 an impossible contradiction set in: a multi-national empire founded on dynastic legitimacy contained within it something which claimed to be a national state. The rulers of this state, historical Hungary, sought to impose the nationality of the Magyar half on the whole of the population. But every one of the non-Magyar nations was attracted to kinsmen who lived along the borders of Hungary and enjoyed greater national liberty, either in independent states or under the rule of Vienna. Inevitably, Serbs and Rumanians became "separatists," and similar trends later gained ground among Slovaks, Croats and Ukrainians.

It is true that, in comparison with modern methods of oppression, the rule of Kálmán or Stephen Tisza was mild. Yet by the more civilised standards of 1900 the arrogance of the leaders, the petty vindictiveness of the officials and the systematic small-scale abuse and perversion of justice by the courts were intolerable.

THESE THINGS EMERGE CLEARLY from my father's diaries and correspondence, the raw material of the books which won him his reputation as a champion of small nations and (undeservedly) as an enemy of the Hungarians. He first went to Hungary in 1906 as an admirer of what he believed to be Hungarian liberalism. What made him change his mind was not so much the arguments of the non-Magyar nationalists as the patent illiberality and dishonesty of Magyar spokesmen, including men of European culture and ostensibly liberal outlook, to whom he had introductions and who received him courteously. One former Minister told him: "We shall just go on until there are no Slovaks left. . . ." This man was in principle in favour of suffrage reform. My father remarked that "if reform is carried through honestly, the nationalities will have power in their hands." (The non-Magyars formed slightly less than half the population.) The ex-Minister "gave a little laugh, and replied 'Ha! Then we could not have an honest reform.'" A professor who was an expert on the nationalities blandly denied that existing legislation obliged the government to erect secondary schools in areas where non-Magyars formed a majority of the population, and when my father produced the printed text of the law, remarked, "I had forgotten." Conversations with Magyar county judges, and personal observation of electoral corruption and petty victimisation completed my father's disillusionment. About a year after he first entered Hungary, in June 1907, he wrote to a close relative:

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> My impressions of Hungary are now less favourable than ever. If I have judged right, their whole political life is corrupt and rotten, and the building of the Magyar hegemony is slowly but surely collapsing.... The choice is still there, even at the eleventh hour, but the ruling classes are *far far* too infatuated and too corrupt to choose aright. A clearance must be made within the next two years, or social revolution is bound to come.

Revolution did come, but only after four years of war, and the men of constructive ideas who came to the political surface, some of whom were my father's friends, were swept away first by the communists and then by the counter-revolutionaries, who tried hard, though not entirely successfully, to restore the past. But war had come as a result of an inept foreign policy determined not in Budapest but in Vienna. The Vienna governments treated the nationalities in the western part of the Monarchy much more humanely than did the Hungarian, yet in their different way they were no less incapable of satisfying them. My father put his hopes in Vienna statesmen right up to July 1914, but he was disappointed. By drifting into foreign adventures, the rulers of the Monarchy brought down disaster not only on themselves but on the whole of Europe.

By the beginning of the 20th century ten nations in Central Europe were growing up or had grown up. The tutelage of an elderly relative, even if he had great past merits, and still showed occasional charm, was something they could stand no longer. The time had come for them to live their own way, make their own mistakes and develop their own society and culture. Though they have had bad leaders and false prophets in abundance, they have fulfilled much of their promise. I at least remain convinced fifty years later that the admittedly great loss from the fall of the Monarchy was more than compensated by the release of new energies, talents and hopes. The Czechs and Slovaks have shown their quality to the world, and so did the Hungarians twelve years ago.

When I remember what my Rumanian and Yugoslav friends have endured, and how they have emerged from it, and especially when I think of some of their grown-up children and their children's friends, I cannot but be moved by hope. Nor, when I think of the Central European peoples, can I forget the exiles, most of whom undoubtedly still belong to their nations. It has become a fashion among some of our scribes to sneer at "professional *émigrés*." (Presumably the exiles got themselves driven out of their countries in order to make a good thing out of it?) Of course they are fully entitled to dissociate themselves from the exiles, with the same feelings as one of their distant predecessors who thanked God that he was not as other men. No doubt the exiles have their share of publicans and sinners. Yet today, not for the first time, it is only in exile that the honour of Poland is publicly upheld; and one day Hungary will be able to acknowledge its debt to its diaspora, from my father's friend the great Oszkár Jászi to the younger exiled writers of today. The struggles and frustrations of these men will not be forgotten.

It is still possible to look with confidence to the future of the nations of Central Europe. But fifty years after the fall of the Monarchy they live in the shadow of a Power very different from the Habsburgs. This Power is alien not only to the culture of the Danube valley, but to all European culture, including that which it inherited from Imperial Russia and trampled under foot. In place of an antiquated dynastic hierarchy, upheld by supercilious noblemen and bumbling *Hofräte*, we have a militant pseudocracy, served by a multitude of indefatigable hypocrites, braggarts and bullies. While the nationalist élites of fifty years ago fought the Monarchy, they also had reason to respect its institutions and they absorbed much of its culture. Today, from Esthonia to Bulgaria and from Bohemia to the Ukraine the attitude of élites and peoples to the Soviet Union is simple: they hate the rulers, despise the officials and pity the Russian people. There is one reason only for the ritual polite noises that are regularly made by Central European spokesmen: fear. The Soviet Union has no policies, no culture, no morality to offer the Central Europeans. Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, Rumania and Czechoslovakia have rejected it in turn. Two have been brought back into subjection by force, one has slid back through the ineptitude of its ruling clique, and two are in danger. The fact remains that the only answers of the Soviet rulers to the problems of the modern world are more missiles, more armoured divisions, more security policemen and more press censors.

The barbarians still have plenty of all four. Yet the 20th century has seen the collapse of too many empires to permit much confidence in the durability of the Muscovite one. Its best hope lies not in the support of its subjects, who are less and less deceived by its lies, nor even in its military strength, but in the weakness, indifference, and hysteria of the nations of Western Europe. Yet if these have the will, they still have the means to prevent their own enslavement or destruction.

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Italy

On the Locomotive

By Luigi Barzini

WHY HAVE the Communists not yet come to power in Italy? Will they do so and, if they do, when (in the indeterminate future, after the next elections in 1973, next autumn, or next month, and how (violently, surreptitiously, or legally)? Is there any organisation or institution left in the country powerful and respected enough to cope with them? What can still be tried, which has not been tried before, to ward off their final triumph, or possibly to attenuate its disagreeable consequences? These questions have once again become as pressing as they were twenty odd years ago, just after the War and before the 1948 elections when the Party suffered a great if temporary setback.

This may be surprising to foreign observers, who know that so many things have happened which should have long ago exorcised the spectre haunting Italy. Tito, who represented an armed threat on the Eastern border, is no longer a Moscow vassal but a friendly neutral; Stalin and Palmiro Togliatti have died: Marxist republics and Communist parties everywhere are torn by doubts and discontent; the class struggle has been transformed into a mannered joust by affluence, a flood of home appliances, and cheap automobiles; Italy, which lay prostrate, ruined, starving, and hopeless, is now a prosperous industrialised country holding its own among the best. Why should a Communist victory still seem so probable and the danger so frightening?

The reasons, of course, are many and complex. Perhaps one of the decisive ones is that, for twenty odd years, all vital political decisions were distorted by the dramatic necessity to prevent an imminent Communist takeover by all means available. This obsessed Italian voters, Roman party leaders, the Catholic Church, the U.S. State Department, and it inevitably justified a number of ambiguous and ingenious stratagems and subterfuges, the launching of wasteful and demagogic projects, the ruthless manipulation of news, the hushing up of all scandals involving parties in power, the formation of unnatural and inefficient coalitions. Parties pursued the public interest only incidentally; most of the time they exerted themselves to build up their own financial and political power, and their electoral following, often by dubious means, in order to cope with the Communist menace.

They necessarily postponed the solutions of many fundamental problems, which were not commonly judged of primary importance in the struggle against the Marxist-Leninists. Good things were done at the same time, to be sure, some of them important; but many more were left undone. (The country, to mention one, is *still* awkwardly ruled by the Fascist penal code!) As a result, the political situation has deteriorated, and the bitter discontent of the lower classes, which feeds the expansive power of the Party, increased steadily as the years went by, instead of diminishing. The economic boom, which many thought would do the trick, did not help. It is commonplace that unrest often grows with industrial development, and that the majority of workers entertain dreams of revolution not when they suffer privations but when their living conditions improve and their expectations rise.

THE ITALIAN SITUATION is not, as many think, merely a marginal and picturesque one. It may be worth paying some attention to. The consequences of the deterioration and possible failure of the liberal and democratic parties could be calamitous, not only for the future of the country itself, but also for the balance of power which is now precariously assuring the peace of the world. Italy has a unique geographic position that would be important even if it were uninhabited. The Po valley is a glacis between East and West; the rest of the peninsula a mole dominating vital communications in the Mediterranean. Most of the wars for the control of the world

LUIGI BARZINI'S *controversial book on* The Italians *appeared first in English in 1964 (Atheneum, New York; Hamish Hamilton, London) and subsequently—with some trepidation on the part of author and publisher—in Italy. Among his articles in* ENCOUNTER *are "The Difference in the South" (June 1962), "Benito Mussolini" (July 1964), "The Peaceful Invasion" (August 1964), "The Anatomy of Expertise" (January 1968).*

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were decided by naval battles in this general area: Actium, Lepanto, Aboukir, Trafalgar, and Cape Matapan, among others.

That politics in Italy can be dangerous for all is a well known fact among specialists. It was "to prevent a Bolshevik victory" that young Italians marched on Rome in 1922. They thought that they too could save Italy not by seriously tackling all the problems but by the use of arbitrary power, intimidation, and subterfuges, more in the style of the Mafia than the rule of law; they set up an oppressive and inefficient régime buttressed by police and propaganda, and spread a smokescreen of rhetoric over their failings. In the end, they helped provoke the Second World War which left their country a mass of rubble. The Italian Communist Party emerged as the largest in Europe, outside the Soviet Union, and the wisest of all. One is tempted to conclude from past experience that, for the safety of the rest of the world, the only way the Italians should follow to defeat Communism is a simple one—to govern as well and honestly as possible, taking on all the real problems, and to placate the people's discontent by trying to give them the efficient institutions necessary in a modern land. This has never been tried. Everything else, no matter how alluring, is to be considered a dangerous panacea which makes matters worse: a charlatan's nostrum.

THAT "NOTHING" WILL PREVENT Italy from becoming a Marxist Republic one day soon, firmly ruled by a proletarian dictatorship, is an article of faith only among millions of Communist rank-and-file members and their associated voters. (Many hold expensive Party bond issues which will be "redeemed after the final victory over the forces of imperialism and reaction.") The cadres are more prudent and less sanguine. They soberly deduce from the reality surrounding them that a serious breakdown of the State machinery is to be expected sooner or later, and they believe that the parties in power are too weak, befuddled, demoralised, tired, and paralysed by internal squabbles, to face the coming emergency. They concede that their Party will almost inevitably be entrusted with a vital role, whether it wants it or not, as it is the second largest party and the only coherent political force of the Left with the necessary discipline, doctrine, experience, and authority. They will not shirk their responsibilities, when the time comes, and will do their duty.

What will their role be exactly? Here they are in a quandary.

Will the Party come to *de facto* forms of collaboration with the government? Or, to save itself from the general wreckage, must it face the inevitability of armed revolution? Can a civil war be avoided? What will the Western Allies do? And, in case of victory, what shape will Marxism-Leninism *all'italiana* assume? Many expect to be truly unorthodox, as they have timidly proclaimed themselves in print, but are they "unorthodox" enough to forgo the advantages of a one-party police state once they are in charge? The old handbooks on how to make a revolution and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat are all obsolete. They became useless after Czechoslovakia. All this is complicated by the fact that international Communism is tortured by a vast schismatic struggle, and by the sporadic warfare between the two greatest Marxist empires. The Italian Party itself is in a crisis: it has changed from the simple and ruthless organisation of the Bolshevik fathers to the subtle, Machiavellian and Italianised (but just as ruthless) organisation of the sons. Furthermore, the prodigious economic boom in Italy made the radical reappraisal of traditional positions inevitable. Will today's well-fed workers follow as easily as the starving unemployed did? The old Stalinist élite is decrepit, and the young are uncertain. Many of them have become accustomed (and some are also secretly fond of) the prestige and bourgeois liberties enjoyed by eloquent revolutionaries in Western democracies. What will they do? Can they really take power?

Togliatti Reconsidered

THE PARTY is still conditioned by the Togliatti inheritance. It was Togliatti himself who prevented the Communists from taking power in the years immediately following the liberation, when they could have done so by merely giving a few orders. The Allied armies had vanished; the government was disarmed and impotent; the middle class was terrorised and divided; the country was in turmoil; the economy in ruins; the people (accustomed to authoritarian rule) were desperate and hungry. The Party was rich, powerful, disciplined, and still controlled a secret and well-oiled military machine. It had an immense following of fanatic and impatient chiliasts. In the government until 1947, it infiltrated loyal men in key positions at all levels: in the bureaucracy, armed forces, railways, telegraphs, telephones, radio, and many vital industries. Even the switchboards of several Ministries were in its hands. The rank-and-file pleaded with Togliatti: "*Quando si smura?*" (or "When do we break down the walls behind which our weapons are stored?"). It was Togliatti alone who did not believe the moment had come. He once explained his point of view in these words:

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> The British and the Americans had no intention of allowing the Italians to decide their own future and could not allow a definitive blow to be struck against the old capitalistic system. We were all seriously engaged merely to secure a minimum of autonomy for Italy. The recognition of Italian independence would have been withdrawn at the first signs of an ascendancy of the workers' parties and, more especially, if the Communist Party appeared to triumph, ready to eliminate the reactionary classes. A period of enslavement could then be considered inevitable for the country, a semi-colonial period under foreign control, which would have driven the workers' movement underground. . . .[1]

Many now consider his fears excessive in retrospect, *i.e.* not thoroughly based on the sober valuation of realities which Marx recommends. For one thing, he attributed to the British and Americans the kind of logic, clarity and iron determination which Marxists always attribute to their satanic class enemy. His thinking was possibly also distorted by a subconscious need to hide his personal temperament behind intricate political justifications. He was no hot-blooded revolutionary. He personally disliked violence, massacres, and mass deportations, although he had to tolerate such things all his life. They were a disagreeable aspect of his job. He was by nature a gentle philosopher, known in his old Comintern days as a man who could always write a subtle thesis proving anything at all or its contrary, whatever in fact the leaders needed to prove. Stalin nicknamed him "The Professor." His own personal inclinations, his compulsive love of tidiness and thrift, made him prefer a gradual and well directed transformation of society to convulsive, haphazard, and wasteful revolts, whose results could never be determined beforehand. (He was suspected at one time of being a deviationist of the right, a "Bukharinist.") In the memorandum he wrote in the U.S.S.R. a few days before his death at Yalta in 1964 (the document which is now officially considered his "political testament"),[2] he clarified his preoccupations:

> Deeply reflecting on the theme of the possibility of constructing socialism by peaceful means, we come to the necessity of defining exactly what we mean by democracy in a bourgeois State, determining how we can help to enlarge the frontiers of liberty and democratic institutions, and deciding what forms the participation of the working masses in the economic and political life of the country can take which will be most efficacious. The question arises whether it is possible to conquer positions of power within the constraints of a bourgeois State which has not changed its nature and to provoke progressive transformations of the institutions from the inside, so to speak. . . .

In other words he did not exclude the usefulness of a violent *coup d'état*, and could not easily reject the theoretical necessity of revolutions, which would quickly eliminate the bourgeoisie both politically and physically from the scene. But he was tempted to believe (though he never said so officially) that "bourgeois liberties" could be considered a conquest of all men for all times and not of a single class, and that not only they could be made use of by the workers to take power painlessly, but should be respected and preserved by them. His last words contained a subversive charge (with delayed detonation devices) which endangered the orthodoxy and monolithism of the international Communist movement.

He worked to make his Party what he needed for the job as he saw it. He had to cope with Electoral Defeat (1948) and Cold War. First of all, he eliminated many illiterate fanatics and terrorists from responsible positions, men who had emerged from Fascist jails, the underground, and the resistance; and he disbanded all clandestine armed organisations, probably leading the police to discover many (though not all) caches of weapons. He built up an élite of intellectuals in his own image, pale men, Left Hegelians, Marxist-Leninist theologians, who usually wore glasses, thought intricately, studied history and sociology, and delivered speeches lasting half a day.

He revised the Party line, trying to hide (but not contradict) some of the harshest and most embarassing Soviet theses under elegant euphemisms. (When I asked him once how one could believe improbable lies, like the charge that Beria was in the pay of Western Intelligence Services, he said: "Such things have to be interpreted like rhetorical figures. Beria behaved as if he was an agent of the Intelligence Service, did he not? Therefore one could say, for short, that he *was* an agent of the Intelligence Service.") He stopped all anti-clerical propaganda (power cannot be achieved in Italy without coming to some understanding with the Church). Above all, he tried to pacify the bourgeoisie by attenuating the terrifying image of the blood-thirsty Communist, ready to deport and exterminate *en masse* all political opponents. (This aim, of course, he never fully managed to achieve, both because the hard core of the

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[1] *Conversando con Togliatti*, by Marcella and Maurizio Ferrara (Edizioni di Cultura Sociale, Rome, 1953), p. 361.

[2] See Ignazio Silone "On the Italian Left (Togliatti's Testament)," ENCOUNTER, March 1965, pp. 65–67.

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Party still cherished such hopes, and because the fear of Communism was indispensable to the Christian Democrats who would have seen their votes dwindle dangerously the moment the middle class stopped being frightened.)

He was accused of following strict orders from Moscow. This was only partly true. To be sure, in 1947–8, Moscow believed that the world had been divided at Yalta once and for all between two spheres of influence; that the Americans would surely go to war to prevent any part of their sphere from slipping into the Marxist camp; and that this was a serious matter, as the U.S.A. then possessed the only atomic bombs in existence. Therefore his Party was allowed all kinds of subversive activities but one. It could not start a revolution and could not take advantage of historic circumstances, no matter how favourable, to take power illegally. Its main task was the defence of the interests of the Soviet Union. This he did, strenuously attacking UNRRA, the Marshall Plan, the Atlantic Alliance, and the European Economic Community among others.

He repeatedly promised the neutrality of the Communist Party in internal affairs and its active collaboration with a bourgeois government ("any bourgeois government," he daringly specified at one time) which would take Italy away from the imperialist camp. Serving as he did Soviet interests, he was not moved by vulgar servility. There were always theoretical reasons for placing the interests of the U.S.S.R. almost scandalously ahead of the prosperity and welfare of Italian workers. As Togliatti explained it, the U.S.S.R. *was* the proletarian revolution; the Italian Party was strong, and able, eventually, to promote the progress of the workers and build an Italian Marxist State only if it acted for the time being as an *instrumentum* of Soviet power.

He could not be said to obey the orders from the Kremlin also because he himself wrote the Kremlin orders. He had long ago defined the need to collaborate with democratic parties; formulated, with Dimitroff, the "Popular Front" theory in 1934; applied it for years and especially during the War, when he worked together with Italian anti-Fascist bourgeois parties and King Victor Emmanuel. He disapproved of Tito, who had stubbornly followed a contrary policy and had exterminated the Monarchists who had fought the Germans in the underground. After the death of Stalin, Togliatti was one of a handful of survivors of the Comintern of the 1920s, the most authoritative non-Russian theoretician left, whose opinions determined the official line. He was the man who formulated the policy guiding all Parties in the West, including his own.

THE TOGLIATTI FORMULA was successful. The Party became the most efficient and reliable workers' party in Italy, at an historical moment when the workers evidently needed one. It runs the important trade unions and helps promote a few reforms, not too effectively, of course, as its power depends on the workers' discontent). It worries the middle class, the industrialists, the land owners, the Church, and the State Department. It is the loving foster-mother of many intellectuals of all colours, who find peace, prizes, and protection in its embrace. As an autonomous Italian socialist party it could not help disagreeing at times with the official Moscow line. It dislikes too strict control of the arts and sciences, disapproves outright excommunication of the Chinese, and now mildly objects to the theory that orthodox Marxist armies must invade Marxist countries whenever these try to liberalise their régimes (though it whole-heartedly approved of the intervention in Hungary in 1956).

On the whole, however, in almost fifty years, it has acted as a faithful tool of Soviet policy on all important occasions. This has never diminished its prestige. On the contrary, its power as an Italian workers' party is enhanced by the fact that it is supported by Moscow. At the same time, it could not be supported by Moscow (and render Moscow effective services in Italy) if it were not, first of all, the best socialist party in Italy, with deep roots in the century-old local history, attuned to the national character and prejudices, able to express a few rare dissenting opinions.

Three sociological strata can be distinguished in it. The *élite* is a self-perpetuating group of able and pliant philosophers. Under them are the organisers, the Party members, the hard-core militants, many of whom are still waiting for the revolution. Below these are the voters, millions of them, who know practically nothing of Marxism but are vaguely attracted by what they know as the poor people's natural party. The structure is centralised but, within the limitations of a Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist party, relatively liberal. Opponents and critics of the official line, men who represent the diverging tendencies of the revolutionaries (left) and of the voters (right), are allowed to voice mildly dissenting views, mostly on matters of tactics rather than principle, as long as they are solidly backed by sacred texts. Dissidents are not permitted, however, to found movements or "*correnti*" of their own and print their own publications. In the end everybody always does with discipline what the leaders decide, according to the rules of so-called "democratic centralism."

Dissatisfied Communists point out that the Togliatti formula has allowed the card-holding

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militants to dwindle from 2½ millions after the war to 1½ million now. But the leaders are satisfied with the steady increase in voting strength. The Party, allied to the Socialists, elected 183 deputies in 1948 (30·97% of the total); alone, it won 143 seats in 1953 (22·70%); 140 in 1958 (22·68%); 166 in 1963 (25·2%); and 177 in 1968 (26·9%). In other words the revolutionary stratum is getting thinner while the local workers' party has been growing steadily since 1948. The massive presence of representatives in both Chambers, aided by their extreme Left allies, is not unimportant. It has always allowed them to influence one way or another all political decisions. Timid government coalitions, frightened by possible disorders in the streets and the factories as well as stubborn opposition in Parliament, steer clear of excessively controversial measures which might provoke the extreme Left's bristling opposition.

This has aided some of the ruling parties in their reluctance to tackle really fundamental problems. The increase in voting strength is pursued also for precise strategic reasons. Antonio Gramsci (erroneously called the founder of the Party, really its first outstanding thinker) pointed out long ago that the Communists could not hope to take power in Italy by themselves, except in very exceptional circumstances, as the revolutionary Left is always sociologically limited to a few intellectuals and a small fringe of fanatical followers. They usually manage to instigate violent counter-reactions, coalesce disparate and contrasting forces against them, and at best succeed in provoking the formation of "strong governments" in the "defence of national interests." Therefore they must try to attract moderate allies by pursuing moderate but intelligently graduated aims. Among the moderate allies not to be irritated for the time being in Italy are the revolutionary socialists, the social democrats, the more democratic bourgeois and the left-wing of the Catholic movement.

The Centre-Left

THOUGHTFUL OBSERVERS of the Italian scene began to believe in the 1950s that the only easy way to enfeeble the Communists was to free their principal ally, the Socialist Party led by Pietro Nenni, from their embrace. In 1958 it had won 4,206,726 votes (or 14·3% of the total) and 84 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The Nenni Socialists had been disciplined and reliable vassals for years (even before the War), and this not entirely for reasons of convenience and prudence, as many insinuated, but also because they feared that "a split in the working-class parties" might once again confer a decisive advantage to the Right. After the War they duly signed all the Communist manifestos, took part in all demonstrations, riots, and strikes, served as auxiliaries in the Communists' trade unions, and voted with them on all important issues. They represented a conspicuous, if not decisive, arithmetical component of Left opposition.

As the War paled in men's memories, the country was reconstructed, the economy somehow managed to become one of the most modern, vigorous, competitive, and fastest expanding in the West, and the menace of an imminent Communist apocalypse waned, the Nenni men began to have misgivings. Many remembered they had always been democrats and fighters for liberty and that they had never entirely shared the authoritarian concepts of the Stalinist Communist Party. They found themselves in 1956 on the side of the Hungarian rebels against the Soviet tanks. Pietro Nenni was among them.

These men tended to agree more and more with the views of the Social Democrats who, led by Giuseppe Saragat, had broken away from the mother party in 1947 on the Communist issue. They had not wanted to be accomplices in the formation of another totalitarian dictatorship, no matter how nobly justified. The Social Democrats were part of the coalition with the Liberals, the Republicans, and the Christian Democrats, with a majority of but a few votes, which helped govern the country in the twelve years in which Italy emerged from her ashes, signed and ratified the Atlantic Pact, and helped form the European Economic Community. A reunification of the two Socialist Parties was looked upon with favour by the two ageing leaders, both of whom wanted to be at rest with their consciences. Nenni refused to be any longer a brother-in-arms of the Communists; Saragat had never got over the remorse of having "divided the working class," an unforgivable sin (to which, incidentally, Italian Socialists are prone and have succumbed numberless times in the past eighty years).

The reunification of the two splinters was considered by all the really crucial move. It would give the new Centre-Left government a large and stable majority in Parliament, and make the coalition truly irreversible, as there was no longer a spare majority for the Christian Democrats to turn to in case of failure. This gave confidence to the Socialists, who thought they would be able to impose their will on the Christian Democrats, under the threat of the only alternative: new elections.

It was not an easy operation to unify the Socialists and lead them to a coalition with the Catholics. Nenni feared that too many of his

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followers, many of whom were primitive and emotional socialists, would not understand it and would once again split the Party. In spite of his precautions, many in fact broke away and founded a splinter formation, the PSIUP (or *Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria*), which adequately filled the empty space at the side of the Communists.

The Republicans, led by Ugo La Malfa, a tiny middle-class formation with a glorious past, believed that a Centre-Left coalition would have the power and the clear ideas necessary to tackle the one problem whose solution was, as we know, the only effective anti-Communist operation: the reconstruction, modernisation, and moral reform of the State machinery. La Malfa hoped that the new government would follow his advice and bridge the abyss between the industrialised *pays réel* and the archaic and decaying *pays officiel*. Like many others, he thought the preceding governments' reluctance to improve the efficiency of the administration was the fault of the Liberals alone.

The Christian Democrats, who even if they deny it, undoubtedly are the secular arm of the Church, had more complex ideas. The Centre-Left coalition was promoted by the Vatican partly for the hopes shared by Saragat, Nenni, and La Malfa, but also for reasons of its own. It was thought that an alliance with a proletarian party would help free the Church from the stigma of being a staunch supporter of Cold-War anti-Communism, the defender of private property and a capitalist market economy, charges which had weakened its hold on Italian and other Western workers and had made relations with the régimes in Eastern Europe extremely difficult. In other words, the Church was not solely thinking in terms of the welfare of Italy (which is only incidentally its preoccupation), but of millions of Catholics beyond the Adriatic and the Elbe, in Yugoslavia, Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine, who urgently needed aid and protection. It knew that without the tolerance of local governments, Eastern Catholics would be driven underground and, before long, reduced to a heroic minority of saints and martyrs. To be sure, the new orientation would have to be carried out in agreement and with the consent of the American Catholics who were the main source of financial and political power for the Church.

The design, of course, met with enthusiastic transatlantic approval. It was supported by enlightened Italians the Americans trusted for reasons that were almost too easy to understand. It was irresistible as it looked on paper to be the definitive, simple, clear-cut surgical operation that would settle the matter once and for all. The State Department saw it as the local application of a formula they had encouraged (or were intending to encourage) in other countries: the formation of an alliance between progressive Catholics and anti-Communist (or non-Communist) parties of the Left. The men in charge unfortunately overlooked two elements which made the Italian situation dissimilar from that in other countries. (1) There is no Italian Catholic Church led by an Italian Primate. (2) Italian Socialists are different from Socialists almost anywhere else in Europe.

National Churches exist, of course, in all Catholic countries. Often, in times of trouble, they face foreign oppressors or internal menaces, heroically identifying themselves with the soul of their nation. Local Primates have been known proudly to defy the Vatican itself, when the ultramontane views appeared to endanger the moral and spiritual well-being of their flock. The only Church existing in Italy is the Universal Church. Its primary duty is—rightly, I think—the defence and promotion of its universal mission. The Primate of Italy is the Pope. This has always made the Church more vulnerable to hostile mass movements which endanger social peace in Italy, and often more eager than necessary to come to an agreement with them.

The peculiar quality of Italian Socialists is due to the fact that they are 19th-century Romantics. They have always been agitating wildly in the opposition, have practically no experience of administration or government, and tend to lose the support of their voters (and break up) whenever they try to collaborate with the Church or the class enemies. To be sure, some leaders are as contemporary, well-read, and able as other European Socialists, but they have no decisive weight in their Party. The best are seldom re-elected.

In spite of these points, the State Department (and other U.S. organisations) worked hard to bring about the desired coalition. How hard, how long, how subtly, by what visible and invisible means, they did it, will be known for sure years from now when the relevant documents are published. A few pages in recent books of memoirs, scraps of information published in remote magazines, a few leaks and unreliable rumours only allow us to have a vague idea of the extent and the cost of the operation (doubtless one of the most ambitious ever carried out outside Latin America). Among its results is surely not an increase of American popularity among Italians, a few of whom remember that their country was kept in subjection for centuries, after the Counter-Reformation, by a comparable alliance of Church and Empire.

The operation was naturally welcomed and aided by the British Labour Party and by big

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business, privately owned big business in Italy and the West, and Italy's large nationalised concerns. It pleased the technocrats everywhere. It was strongly supported by *The New York Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Economist*, the *Observer*, among others, and (obviously) the *Osservatore Romano*. In Italy it was vigorously promoted by *La Stampa* (owned by Fiat) and *Il Giorno* (owned, at the time, by *ENI*, the State petroleum concern). Foreign observers could not be blamed for thinking there was no other easy alternative. The lay Italian parties were too small and too weak to play a decisive role. It would have taken many years to build them up. Was the operation not designed to weaken the Communists, these foreigners asked themselves, acquire the goodwill of a substantial part of the proletariat, assure the solid majority necessary to pass much overdue legislation, guarantee social stability for the time being, promote further economic and social development, encourage foreign investments? Could anything else be tried that would produce such results?

ALMOST NONE OF THESE THINGS turned out as hoped. The newly formed *Partito Socialista di Unità Proletaria* became, as Nenni feared, an important and energetic ally of the Communists, and a handy receptacle for all kinds of Left-wing deviationists who could disturb the harmony and discipline of the orthodox Communist Party. The *PSIUP* won 23 seats in the 1968 elections and shows signs of gaining more. The Communist Party itself does not seem to be withering away. It gains approximately one million more votes every time the Italians go to the polls, and sees its power and influence grow in every field, in spite of its own internal crisis and that of the world Communist movement. The unified Socialist Party in the government coalition lost votes in the 1968 elections and is now tortured by dissensions and polemics.

Little of the urgently needed legislation was proposed or passed. Schools, courts, hospitals, public housing, and the State social security organisations go on deteriorating at a quicker rate than before. Social stability was not assured. Unrest is growing. Workers, students, professors, doctors, State employees, housewives, old people living on miserable pensions, take part in continuous demonstrations, strikes, the occupation of public buildings, asking for higher wages, pensions, better living conditions, re-organisation of offices, modern laws, or the end of the Viet Nam war. Everybody knows the government tackles only those problems whose urgency is advertised by means of riots. The abyss between the industrialised *pays réel* and the archaic *pays officiel* grows deeper and more unbridgeable.

There are, to be sure, many bright spots. Industrial production rises steadily; the lira is stable; exports to the Common Market and elsewhere in the world are growing. Millions of tourists leave millions of dollars behind them every years. The people are lively, energetic, industrious.

On closer examination, however, even in the economy there are a few disquieting features. The growth in industrial production is not matched by a proportionate increase in employment. The number of employed workers decreased by 190,000 in 1968. New investments are lagging. The stock exchanges are deserted. Capital seeks more secure and remunerative prospects abroad, and couriers cross the Swiss border carrying valises filled with banknotes.

People who still save money are intimidated by imprudent speeches made by Cabinet ministers, ill-conceived laws (many of which, like the nationalisation of electric industry, would have been extremely useful to the country's economy if more carefully thought out), or the threat of future punitive laws which may never be passed. Local consumption is still low, lower than the economy should permit or encourage. Industries seek American partners, to acquire new capital, to be sure, and to modernise their plants with transatlantic know-how, but also to find some protection from their own government under the Stars & Stripes. In other words, private Italy is still progressing vigorously (for the time being) in spite of public Italy, but not as vigorously as in the '50s.

That the Italians flourish in spite of bad governments has always been true, to some extent, in a country where the inhabitants, under foreign oppressors and inefficient rulers, had to develop private virtues and public vices to defend themselves. Business men instinctively prefer a paralytic government to one that would promote immature and dangerous reforms. The grand hope always was that the national habits would gradually dissolve the moment a more modern and farther-looking government would for once, try to help the people instead of hindering them.

The causes of the government's paralysis are not lack of ideas, goodwill, or good men in the Cabinet. Neglected problems have by now become so entangled that they can no longer be solved simply by a few ingenious laws (even if such laws could be agreed upon, formulated, passed by Parliament, and enforced); other causes are built-in in the Centre-Left coalition itself. Most important reforms are bogged down, because the Christian Democrats cannot agree with the Socialists and the Socialists cannot always agree with themselves. The fundamental

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point is that the State administration is too inefficient (and the laws governing it too obsolete) for *any* political action to produce any desirable effect.

The State cannot be reformed because the parties in power have too divergent views of what a modern State organisation should look like. The Socialists dream of a vast variety of ideal prototypes, ranging from extremist, utopian, Left-of-Lenin models, to moderate British-type or Scandinavian models. They are, however, embarrassed in their decisions by the aggressive competition of the Communists, who take voters away from them by accusing them consistently of "selling out the proletariat" to the bourgeoisie. They therefore have to support vociferously the most drastic punitive solutions, to carry on the class-war, even when the majority would be ready quietly to accept realistic proposals. On the other hand, their persistent extremism spreads fear among the middle-class who vote increasingly for the Christian Democrats, in order to give them the necessary force to cope with such uncomfortable allies. The Socialists, therefore, are bound to go on losing one way or the other, whatever they do.

The Christian Democrats should profit by the Socialists' weakness and successfully promote the particular reforms dear to their hearts: the reforms needed for the gradual construction of a model Christian Democracy. Unfortunately, there is no such model. They cannot agree among themselves what it should look like because theirs is not a European, or ideologically homogeneous, party, but a patchwork coalition of practically all the principal social, cultural, economic and political ideas existing in Italy. The membership ranges from the extreme Right (the authoritarian champions of archaic privileges, the enemies of a civil divorce law), to the Centre (the *Dorotei*, who promote a society manoeuvred from above by technocrats), and the extreme Left fringe (quasi-Communist Catholics). All these men are kept together not by a political idea but by the exercise of power, ecclesiastical interests, and religious faith. The only orthodoxy enforced among them, the only set of beliefs they all uniformly must share without deviations, is the Athanasian Creed.

Most of them were formed by Catholic schools and universities during the decades when the State was the opponent of the Vatican's temporal pretensions. They were imbued not only with the Church's century-old mistrust of lay laws and authorities but by its bitter defiance of the Italian State. Almost all of them, Right, Centre, Left, think any State, even one created *ex novo* and run by them, can but be a frail human construction, reflecting transient ideals, beset by temptation and doomed to decay. They therefore watch the administration break down without surprise—and without doing much to repair the damage and retard its final collapse. They think nothing can really be done, man is what he is (and the Italian man is more man than others), the country has always known bad governments, and perfection is only to be found in Heaven. In fact the Christian Democratic Party flourishes in the prevailing disorder and corruption. It is indirectly financed out of public funds, finds jobs for its *clientes* in the bureaucracy, awards public-works contracts to its loyal friends, and entrusts nationalised industries solely to its own men. In sum, the best of them cannot shed their old prejudices, even now that they are in power, and cannot remember that the institutions are now also the defence of their own and the Church's liberties.

The situation is so bad that the Communists themselves are upset. Communist Deputy Ugo Bartesaghi expressed their misgivings in a recent speech in Parliament:

> The country will revolt on account of the things you are not capable of doing, all the problems you cannot solve.... There is no other alternative to your impotence than rebellion, a rebellion which will take place whether we [the Communists] want it or not, a chaotic, disorderly, violent revolution, for which you alone will be responsible!

A Reversal, "con garbo"?

A GROWING NUMBER OF Christian Democrats and Socialists are beginning to think that (according to the old political rule) the only way out and the only hope is an agreement with the Communists. Ambiguous speeches are being made more and more often by authoritative leaders of both government parties, cautiously exploring this possibility. One of them, the best known, Christian Democrat Aldo Moro, ex-prime minister, is now officially considered the future leader of a pro-Communist (or non-anti-Communist) government. Another, Luigi Bertoldi, deputy secretary of the Socialist Party, recently said: "We do not consider including the Communists in a government coalition. This they would refuse as a bad bargain. We aim, instead, to accept the reality of their existence and their power in the country and in Parliament." The deputy Prime Minister, Francesco de Martino (a socialist), does not hide his desire to collaborate with the Communists in all those projects in which the Christian Democrats might drag their feet.

To be sure, the citizens who voted for the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, thinking these two parties would defend them from revolution and a Communist take-over, would be

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astounded and frightened by a sudden and radical reversal. The State Department and the NATO powers would equally look dimly upon a change of fronts; the Catholic masses in the United States would consider it a betrayal of their trust in the Vatican. The operation will have to be done (if at all) very very gently, *con garbo*. In the beginning the Communists will have to keep their place in the Opposition and play their part. Harsh polemics, violent accusations, and endless controversies should go on as if everything was normal. But, at the same time, under-the-counter *ad hoc* deals could be arranged (as de Martino suggested) on specific problems for the time being and, later on, on more important general questions.

Obviously, the men who want to come to an understanding with the Communist Party, and to govern the country with its help and connivance, are following a logical line. If an alliance between the Socialists and the Christian Democrats was considered necessary for various reasons, an eventual alliance with the Communists would be even more so for all the same reasons (except one, the defence against Communism). In fact, most of the promises of the Centre-Left could only be fulfilled by the Communist Party. It alone has the power to give stability to a government; ensure peace and order in the streets, the factories, and Parliament; keep the students studying quietly; keep the workers contented with reasonable wages; and help to transform Italy eventually into a quasi-socialist State, where the Church would find ample protection for her activities, Italians keep their big mouths shut, and nationalised industries develop without hindrance, or excessive controls.

THE DIFFICULTY, of course, is in the price to be paid. Obviously, the Communists would want what they have always demanded: a gradual neutralisation of Italy, its eventual withdrawal from the Atlantic Pact, the departure from Italian soil of all foreign armed forces, air and naval bases, and atomic weaponry. But this is not an imminent matter. For the time being what is envisaged is the temporary purchase of benevolence and a relaxation of tension. The price can be fixed on each occasion: the passing of laws which the Communists might want, for reasons of their own, like the division of Italy into autonomous regions (some of the key ones will be dominated by them); the election of Communists to the European Parliament in Strasbourg; or disarming the police. Some of these things are already being done, anyway. More will follow gradually.

The Communists are clearly fascinated by all this, but are apprehensive and nervous. To be sure, they are willing to collaborate now and again on particular reforms, chosen by them, which would facilitate their activities. They know that the repeated appeals to them by majority leaders enfeeble the government and strengthen the Party; but they also know that any form of open collaboration or connivance with the Christian Democrats and the Socialists is looked upon with horror by the rank-and-file. The leaders know they thrived, like the Christian Democrats, for more than two decades, on anti-Communism. It was precisely the fact that they were feared and opposed by the Church, the bourgeoisie, and the Americans, that made millions of poor Italians cast their vote for the Party. Furthermore, collaboration would not be a solution but a palliative, a subterfuge to gain time. The important point is what will happen later. The Communists agree that the situation is deteriorating rapidly, things are moving towards a final crisis, and there is a power vacuum at the top. They know (as Ugo La Malfa has repeatedly affirmed) that this is "the last of the Centre-Left governments." They know they will have a great role to play when the present coalition collapses, a role for which they have prepared theselves since 1920.

A reading of modern history suggests that similarly weak Centre-Left alliances, which tried

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unsuccessfully in the past to govern troubled and defeated countries, were almost always followed by reactionary and authoritarian régimes or dictatorships. Communists know that this was facilitated whenever a premature revolution was staged. The fact that no such reactionary forces exist in Italy today does not matter. Marxists *know* that "History" will generate the parties and leaders necessary for a particular situation when the times are "ripe." It is therefore probable that the men capable of engineering an authoritarian *coup d'état* will emerge at the proper moment. Clearly a day will come when the industrialised *pays réel* (which has looked indifferently in the past on the decay of the administration and the institutions because it believed that a little disorder was good for business) will discover that a reasonably efficient state is preferable. A day will come when the people will be afraid of bloody riots and disorders in the streets. Furthermore, on that day, the Communists believe, the "Law & Order" forces in Italy will find support from abroad, from Atlantic allies frightened by the danger of an imminent Communist take-over.

What must the Party do? Only a vigilant, well-disciplined and organised Party with clear ideas, aware of the dangers of the situation, capable of getting millions of workers in the streets at a moment's notice, paralysing the life of the country, can confront enemy machinations and prevent a Right-wing *coup d'état*. On the other hand, it is the duty of the Communists to become the reluctant pretorian guard of the Centre-Left government, to see to it that it is not toppled by the wrong people. They should, however, not go so far as to help the government live more vigorously. This is a difficult tight-rope act. To keep up the strength of their Party, they must intensify agitation in the country, increase strikes and riots, fan discontent. Yet all this will not strengthen the government but inevitably enfeeble it further, fan anti-Communist feelings, encourage Right-wing plots, and facilitate the formation of an anti-Communist bloc.

There are other pitfalls. The "vanguard of the proletariat" is often tempted at times to march too fast, too decisively and violently, and thereby to lose contact with the frightened masses. This has happened to Communist leaders in the past in several European countries and was the cause of their most conspicuous débâcles. On the other hand, if the Party is too timid, it will encourage the rise of revolutionary movements to the left of it. Furthermore, the Italian Communists know they and their vassals represent roughly one-third of the electorate, not enough to conquer power without outside aid. They need allies. They need Left-wing, democratic, progressive allies. They need the help of the very parties which form the government coalition, against which a revolution would be staged, a government coalition which is being discredited daily by the Communists themselves. They therefore talk of finding allies not among the government parties but among the "Left-wing fringes" of those parties, to form a new coalition. But this elegant compromise is considered improbable even by the leaders who propose it.

They prepare themselves for troubled times ahead with very mixed views. What they would like is to keep things more or less as they are: the country in turmoil, the government losing more and more authority, the Communists gaining more and more votes at every election. But a day will come when they will have reached a percentage high enough to have power thrust on them. They will then have to make up their minds. Even this seemingly placid hypothesis would be very dangerous. Their victory (or their approach to victory) would threaten profound international repercussions, provoke a realignment of the balance of forces between the two blocs, and surely increase the risk of a European conflict. Obviously, the Soviet Union has more vital and urgent problems elsewhere than to encourage a Communist government, let alone a proletarian revolution, in Italy. Will the Kremlin leaders allow the Italian Communists a free hand when the time comes? But does the Party still have the revolutionary impetus it had at the end of the war, before Togliatti began reforming it? Is it not now, as some believe, merely a large and soft electoral force of moderate labour voters? In other words, will it disobey Soviet orders and carry out its revolutionary mission—or will it find it convenient to accept them as a good and convenient alibi for its own deficiencies?

The most important of all questions is this: Will the paralysis of the government, the rapid decay of the public administration, the accumulation of unsolved problems, the spread of unrest allow the Communists to choose what role they prefer or to postpone the time for decision? What a spectacle for the dialectical philosopher—Marxists being carried forward by their locomotive of History and worrying whether to stay on or get off.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

"*Science & Literature*"

A Reply to Sir Peter Medawar

By John Holloway

If one is cast down—as I am not—by unfavourable circumstances, it might be wise to give up the profession of letters. Many of the best British-Isles authors of today now live in Paris, America, or Ireland: the man of letters finds that his chosen field is silently emptying. In the university, some of his students will be intimating that reality has left him high and dry, and others will be enthusing over the great English classics not in the original but as television serials. If he looks into the future, he sees the landscape, the traditions, the *mores*, and even the human nature which have created his subject all being either transformed by science, or obliterated by its achievements, or terminated by famine. When he then finds that an eminent scientist has given a Romanes Lecture on "Science and Literature," he may well begin to read in expectation of one more attack, this time from a new quarter. I choose my words carefully when I say that he will have to work to find it.

A hundred years ago Bishop Wilberforce attacked science; and at the hands of T. H. Huxley, a Romanes Lecturer perhaps even more distinguished than the present one, he fared extremely ill. His weapons were the weapons of superciliousness, and the man of letters will know better than to use these today. More likely he will feel quite the opposite. He will feel a great sense of inadequacy, partly because when Professor Medawar demands to know whether (to take one example) imbecility isn't perhaps a matter of triiodothyronine, the man of letters will sense his own ignorance on the one hand, and the great collaborative expertise of science on the other; and partly for a more attractive reason—more attractive, though sufficiently daunting all the same. This is, that "Science and Literature" is really a gem of a lecture. It is years since one has read anything like it. Sir Peter knows all about triiodothyronine and the like, but there is also nothing that any man of letters can teach him about presenting a case and enchanting an audience. "I hope I shall not be thought ungracious . . ." the lecture begins. This lecturer can never have been thought ungracious in his life.

Or again, "Science and literature . . . where they might be expected to cooperate, they compete. I regret this very much [and] don't think it necessary. . . . We all want to be friends." This sort of graciousness is among the man of letters' weapons. Now he finds them turned against himself; and if he wants to take issue, must seem to start the uncooperativeness. Elsewhere, mankind's failure "to justify science in any sense except the scientific" is described as "a reproach to all scholars, scientists and humanists alike." Just as the man of letters begins to wonder whether he ought to accept, along with scientists, a share of the blame—he finds it is coming his way altogether. "I cannot even think of a name for the new discipline that might fill those empty spaces," the lecturer proceeds, "*. . . perhaps the word I want is just criticism.*" Poor critics, it is them after all.

I have been writing rather as if the man of letters, when he studies this lecture, is going to think that he has to meet, or maybe to issue, some kind of challenge. Professor Medawar would almost certainly repudiate this. Another of the more gracious passages in his lecture is the closing sentence, where with beautiful lightness and discretion he intimates that he is no enemy but a lover of literature, and that what he has said is all in accord with that fact. Indeed, as I suggested earlier on, "Science and Literature" is so good as a lecture that it is itself a piece of literature. But all the same, lovers sometimes need to be received with a little circumspection, and I think we have a case here.

It may be said that Professor Medawar puts science and literature very much on an even footing. "My contention has been," he says in his concluding section, "that science tends to expel literature, and literature science, from any territory to which they both lay claim." Elsewhere we read of "territories of thought . . . including those upon which literature has a proper claim," and of "large territories of human belief and learning upon which both science . . . and literature have very important things to say." Even though one hesitates over the idea

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that literature has important things to say about large areas of human *learning*, and may wonder in passing whether the sentence had (as it were) been composed for the sake of science, and literature was then slipped in for the sake of fairness, all the same, the impression of an open mind and an even-handed treatment is strong.

I find myself, though, with the difficult task of arguing that this is an illusion: that Professor Medawar, seeming and meaning also to hold the balance even, is putting his thumb down on it all the time. Perhaps he might castigate this way of putting the matter as among the "trollopy metaphors" that he associates with what he calls—too loosely, I believe—"*the* literary style"; or elsewhere, "imaginative writing." But if it comes to that, "trollopy metaphor" is itself a trifle *demi-mondaine*. In fact, for all his dislikes of metaphors, this lecture is rather full of them, ("metaphysical profundities . . . *tuba-notes* from the depths of the Rhine"; "the inane *war-cry* that Beauty is equivalent to Truth"); and sometimes, even though indirectly, they contribute, as with "two quite different worlds, the *salon* and the laboratory," to one's sense that though the balance seems to stay even, this is not quite so. Particularly is this the case with one point in the argument which at first seems especially even in treatment. "Scientific theories . . . begin, *if you like*, as stories . . . we all tell stories." But on reflection, I find that I do not like; because later on, when the metaphor comes again, the balance goes down. The scientist's final story is one "about real life"; but in the end the writer seems to "tell stories" in another sense, and it seems that this has something to do with what a mother reproves her child for ("telling stories"); though, especially if the stories are "wonderfully well told," she does so with "grown-up indulgence." That word "grown-up" comes elsewhere: "factual truth as scientists use it . . . is very advanced, very grown-up." By now, one's sense of an evenly kept balance is less assured than at first.

THESE may seem very small points: but I am trying, little by little, to open out this beautifully sustained texture of argument and implication, and to show that Professor Medawar is much less a friend of literature than we think at first, or than (as I firmly believe) he thinks all the time. Another point of ingress might be what he says about English literature directly: because it is really quite a surprise to notice how unsympathetic this is for the most part. "At a time when the writing of English had reached a peak of *adventurousness and effulgence*." When is this? One cannot tell for certain, but it looks like the time of Shakespeare and Donne—and certainly it is followed, to the lecturer's relief, by "the New Philosophers of the 17th Century." Between them and Blake, things are better: but when Professor Medawar notices an exception his tone is revealing:

> Johnson said that Dryden "delighted to tread upon the brink of meaning. . . ." Don't we all, up to a point? We all recognise a voluptuary element in the higher forms of incomprehension, and a sense of deprivation when matters that have hitherto been mysteries are now made clear.

But don't we also all recognise, in these words, a clear if unintentional hint of the indulgent "grown-up" who is "understanding" the child in others, or perhaps even in himself?

When Professor Medawar turns to the Romantic period, he is very bad; it is at this point that one of the two radical confusions in this lecture begins to show through the skilful surface. At the same time, one must admit that there has been a good deal of bad, programmatic writing on this period, pronouncing (like Professor Medawar) on that non-existent entity the "official Romantic view," and so on, by critics and men of letters; and I am far more embarrassed for my colleagues who have lapsed into these first-year undergraduate errors, than ever Professor Medawar need be for his own imperfections. But all the same, it is just no good saying that the official Romantic view was that Reason and Imagination are antithetical, when there is that celebrated passage, at the end of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, claiming that they are really two names for one thing. Nor can one blithely assert that the Romantics missed "the synergism . . . between imagination and reasoning, between the inventive and the critical faculties," and even level the charge at Coleridge by name, when Coleridge wrote:

> Imagination . . . first put in action by the will and "understanding," and *retained under their irremissive . . . control*, reveals itself in . . . a more than usual state of emotion *with more than usual order*; *judgment ever awake and steady self-possession* with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement.
>
> [*Biographica Literaria*, Ch. 14]

Wordsworth was equally emphatic in an equally celebrated passage:

> . . . *habits of meditation* have . . . prompted and regulated my feelings. For all [*i.e.*, although] good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: and though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who . . . had *also thought long and deeply*.
>
> [Preface to *Poems*, 1800]

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Even so, Wordsworth was not always able to satisfy Keats in these matters:

> ... it seems to me that if Wordsworth had *thought a little deeper* at that moment he would not have written [that] Poem at all ... it is ... not a *search after Truth.*
>
> [*Letter to Bailey, Oct. 1817*

Clearly enough, the emphasis is just the same as when Keats said, of one of his own poems, "I assure you that when I wrote it it was a *regular stepping* of the Imagination *towards a Truth*" [Letter to Taylor, Jan. 1818].

Professor Medawar reproves Arnold for the same blindness as he wrongly attributes to "the Romantics." But when Arnold praised a poet in the highest terms he knew, it ran like this:

> the peculiar [*i.e.*, uniquely excellent] characteristic of the poetry of Sophocles is ... that it represents the highly developed human nature of [Sophocles'] age—human nature developed in a number of directions, politically, socially, religiously, morally developed—*in its completest and most harmonious development in all these directions*; while there is shed over this poetry the charm of that noble serenity which always accompanies true *insight.*
>
> ["The Modern Element in Literature"]

Really, I do not think Professor Medawar would be satisfied if I were to sally into triiodothyronine territory, and boned up on it no better than this.

YET THE CURIOUS THING is that he probably need not have been drawn into these matters at all. Probably, he could have dealt with what he really wanted to deal with, and not taken on the Romantics or anything else of the kind. This is where the basic confusion comes out. Something which he calls the "literary syndrome," for example, he describes like this:

> *First*, an open or implied claim to ... an insight which soars beyond the busy little world of ... facts; *Second*, ... the critical and inventive faculties no longer work together ... but tend if anything to compete ...; *Third*, ... a style ... which ... systematically exploits the voluptuary and rhetorical ... which at first intrigues and dazzles, but in the end bewilders and disgusts.

Self-evidently, this has nothing to do with *Middlemarch*, or *King Lear*, or *Le Rouge et le Noir*, or *Anna Karenina*, or anything which anyone might set up as "literature" over against "science." Nor was it part of Professor Medawar's purpose to do any such fatuous thing: he was not talking about any literary syndrome *tout court*, but about something that, wisely or unwisely, he called "the literary syndrome *in science*." Who may its practitioners be? Save for Lévi-Strauss he names no names; and it is none of my business to replace this angelic reticence by something else. But phrases like "salon philosophy," "French writers," "structuralism," "existential psychiatry," and the like, make matters clear enough. What Professor Medawar really wanted to do was to attack certain forms of pseudo-science. And who am I to say him nay? Only, he seems to have disposed his forces hastily; and, noticing that science was the opposite of pseudo-science, and also in some sense the opposite of literature, to have taken it rather for granted that pseudo-science and literature were pretty much akin. When I think, however, of what he traces in his pseudo-scientific syndrome, what strikes me is how much it sounds not like literature, but like pseudo-literature. If he had arranged his lecture so as to contrast science with pseudo-science, and literature with pseudo-literature, and then to trace both a substantial contrast, and a substantial community, between science and literature in their true and valid forms—his difficulties might have been less. But now I am beginning to rewrite "Science and Literature." It is right to be generous to its author, but not quite so generous as that.

I SUGGESTED earlier that there were two radical confusions in "Science and Literature." This also was over-generous, because more can be found: like thinking that "imaginative writing" is the same as letting one's fingers "stray towards the diapason." Does Professor Medawar suppose that the imagination which has helped to make him so eminent a scientist contributes nothing to his—in spite of occasional lapses—beautifully *non*-diapason style? Here is one more confirmation, though, of the fact that Professor Medawar, in spite of his admiration for the Royal Society and that celebrated enemy of the figurative, its historian Bishop Spratt, is himself, when it comes to metaphors, just a little of a "voluptuary"; and it is a couple more of his *trouvailles* in this direction which help one to see the second radical confusion. This comes in what is perhaps the most interesting part of his lecture, in which he distinguishes scientific from literary or poetic or imaginative *truth*.

The first of these trollopy, voluptuary metaphors in which I sense a confusion is of course the story-telling metaphor itself; for it is clear that "telling stories" can mean more things than one, and fairly clear that it clouds the issue in more ways than one. I think it would be right to say that the Scientist does not really *tell* the "stories," the hypotheses, which in the

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course of his work he finds do not adequately "fit the facts," though they at first gave some promise of doing so. It would be truer, I believe, to say that he considers, reviews, tries out, these subsequently rejected hypotheses. They are "stories," I suppose, certainly in the sense of proving to be (like the child's fibs, possibly) untruths. The verified and established theory is surely not a "story" in this sense at all. If it deserves to be called a "story," that can only be because it is a story *"about real life"* (in Professor Medawar's phrase): a veridical narration. I myself incline to think that the metaphor lets one down here as well, since it seems to me that a scientific theory is not narrative in form at all. If I am right, then the "telling stories" metaphor is no good for either the preliminary or the definitive stage of scientific theorising.

The important confusion occurs, though, when Professor Medawar's story-telling idea is applied to literature. His claim is that science starts with a fiction (the unconfirmed hypothesis) and moves into truth—that is to say, something which is "about real life," which will "conform to reality." Poetic or imaginative efforts, however, "diverge" from this; as for conforming to reality, "this condition is relaxed." In other words, literature remains in all the stages of its production "story-telling" in the original meaning of the term. Its function is not truth-telling in the empirical sense at all. And yet, it may be spoken of, along with science, as "accounts *of the world*"! And yet science and literature have a common goal in that each has "important things to say," in that *both* "give an account *of ourselves* and investigate *our condition*"! The fact is that Professor Medawar seems to have found a metaphor (the word "story") which can equally easily be made to mean either "true statement" or "false fiction," and has then treated it the way Mr. Atlas used to treat iron bars.

THE OTHER TROUBLESOME metaphor is "territory": "there are large territories . . . upon which both science and literature have very important things to say . . . those [territories] upon which literature has a proper claim . . . any territory to which they both lay claim. . . ." This metaphor may not be open to objection in itself; but Professor Medawar is undoubtedly so when *he* uses it of literature, because of the distinction which he asserts between scientific, and literary or poetic, truth. Briefly, his claim is that while scientific truth must both "make sense" (that is, satisfy a criterion of internal coherence) and also satisfy a criterion of "correspondence with reality," with poetic truth, the latter condition is relaxed. The criterion of poetic truth is the coherence criterion alone. But if this is so, then not only can "literature" (which equals "poetry" in this discussion) not possibly have the same "territory" as science; it cannot be said to have a territory at all. There is simply *no* independent reality, "upon" which, or, more idiomatically, about which it can say something "very important." "Upon" and "about" are words in the language of correspondence-truth; and once we recognise this, we recognise that Professor Medawar's lecture is more heavily bedizened with metaphors even than it had seemed; for that literature "opens up a *world* that is larger, more various than real life" proves to be one, and that it "enriches our understanding of the actual by making us move and think and orientate ourselves in a *domain* wider than the actual" is another. World and domain cannot be understood here in any literal sense, or there would be something for the literary truth to correspond to. What transpires is simply this: Professor Medawar sometimes asserts, and sometimes implies, that literature is not "about" anything at all; but at the same time constantly speaks as if it were either about the same reality as science (the reality which at one point, as I mentioned, he called "real life"), or about another, wider, but perfectly genuine reality. Here is the second radical confusion.

But, confused or not, this is the most interesting point in the lecture, and that at which the discussion ought somehow to be pressed forward. I will try briefly, not indeed to conclude this discussion, but at any rate to open it; and I can do so by taking hints from several places in the lecture. First, one notices that Professor Medawar at one point says that established scientific theories are "stories *about real life*." To the man of letters, surely, it is transparently obvious that this is what he must say about many or most of the fictions of major literature. Curiously enough, he would surely want to add that "about *real life*" (as opposed to "about nature" or "about reality") seemed to him if anything to be rather apter for the major literary work than for science. One need not pursue this in order to see that perhaps it points towards ways in which the correspondence criterion applies differently to literary-poetic truth from how it applies to scientific; but unquestionably applies all the same.

Second, there are two particularly interesting observations in this lecture, which come far apart, and which one is a little surprised to find left so. One is about literature and one about science, and they are significantly different yet curiously reminiscent of one another. Here they are:

1. [literary truth] enriches our understanding by making us move and think and orientate ourselves in a domain *wider than the actual* . . .

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2. Scientific reasoning is . . . a dialogue . . . *between the possible and the actual,* between proposal and disposal . . . between *what might be true, and what is in fact the case.*

I find myself wondering whether Professor Medawar happened ever to set these remarks side by side in his mind. What seems to show up from his lecture, though, is that the "possible," the "what might be true," integral as it is to the scientist's thinking, is integral only to its earlier stages, and is "disposed" of as the final stage is reached. But it seems, in contrast to this, that ideas of what is possible or what might be true, as against what is in fact the case, belong as much to the latest stage in the creation of the literary work—the final, finished version—as to any earlier stage; and that this is so not only in more ways than one, but in ways which require more analysis than they have received.

IN SAYING THIS, I have first in mind what everyone knows: that a major literary fiction tells us "about real life" indirectly, while directly it narrates not a historical case, but a "convincing" possible case. About this, however, there is an important and much-neglected fact which needs analysis, though I am not able fully to supply it. It is that the "case" (one recalls James' use of the word) narrated by a major fiction is not properly elucidated by any of the terms which are commonly shared between the scientific and the literary modes of thought. The cases of Anna and Vronsky, or Clarissa and Lovelace, or Birkin and Ursula—and so on—are quite certainly not "average" cases; nor, equally certainly, are they "probable" ones. In their different ways, they are all fairly, or very, exceptional cases; but at the same time, their interest is concealed by the bald use merely of the word "possible." Always, they bear on life more sharply than just to count as "what *might* be true"; they are what might very well be so, or might only too easily be so, or something like that. They are extremes which somehow also have a quality of the classical; or seem revelatory of the nature of the normal, even as they deviate away from it to an extreme. (I suspect that here the man of letters might receive some kind of formal help from the applied mathematician; but on the only occasion when I sought such help, I was unable to explain my problem, and the matter had to lapse. . . .)

There is another respect in which, to speak loosely, "the actual" and "the possible" come together in the literary work with a peculiar intimacy: and this also has been neglected. There is indeed a "domain wider than the actual" in, say, the great novel or play, in that for much of the time, perhaps even all the time, the work asks us to sense how easily, how readily, it is open to more interpretations than one; how close to the way that the writer clearly wants us to see his action and his characters, are other ways of seeing them, which he probably wants us to reject—though if we reject these without coming near to accepting them first, his efforts are as good as wasted. Surely, also, it is at this point that one sees a reason why "about real life" fits literature better even than it does science. This quality of things which one can express (though only loosely) by saying that possibility, risk, and potentiality nudge right up against actuality at every point, is present and potent in literature because so it is also in the common affairs of men. Often, of course, ordinary life admits of such a clear Yes-or-No as I suppose the scientist has when he feels able firmly to eliminate a hypothesis; but one knows the terrible destructiveness of those who think it does so all the time.

Does this mean that Professor Medawar is a terribly destructive man? I am afraid that, like many other real-life questions, this does not quite admit of a clear yes or no. Certainly, that ordinary life is often of that kind means that one cannot always speak quite plainly and unequivocally about it; and—in intention if not always in performance—Professor Medawar is at his least tolerant over obscurity. In his view, unless one is (like Kant) struggling with intrinsically *difficult problems*, to write obscurely is either to lack skill, or to be "up to mischief." "No one who has something . . . important to say will willingly run the risk of its being misunderstood." In reply, one can only say, it depends what you think real life is like; and Professor Medawar seems not to have improved on George Chapman:

> Obscurities in affection of words and undigested conceits, is pedanticall and childish; *but where it shroudeth it selfe in the heart of* [*its*] *subject . . . with that darkness will I labour to be shrouded.*

This would never do for Professor Medawar. Of "the concept of truthfulness which belongs essentially to imaginative literature, that in which the opposite of a truth is not a falsehood but . . . another truth," he says, with a touch of the scorn which one cannot but detect not infrequently when literature and its values are at issue—"*We are back in Beulah.*" But I do not believe that "real life" is Beulah at all.

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A Rejoinder

By P. B. Medawar

TWENTY YEARS AGO, when I first applied for a visa to enter America, a consular official asked me if it was in any sense my ambition to overthrow the Constitution of the United States. I told him that I would certainly not overthrow it on purpose and could only hope that I wouldn't do so by mistake. He didn't seem to think this very funny, and I suppose Mr. John Holloway won't either if I answer him in the same spirit; for he in his turn suspects me of scheming to overthrow literature, and asks himself whether I may not perhaps be a "terribly destructive man." I am sorry he should have misunderstood me so far as to entertain such horrid suspicions, and do not quite know why he thought it right to adopt such a wary and defensive attitude throughout. I am not attacking him or anything he stands for.

Holloway says that my attack was "really" directed against pseudo-science and pseudo-literature. This is true in a sense, but in a sense that is needlessly inexact. Science and literature can be "pseudo" in a great many different ways: science through fraud or self-deception, faulty reasoning, or any one of a number of methodological omissions or mistakes; literature through insincerity, inhumanity, triviality, hollowness, and the rest. In my Romanes Lecture I was speaking about a special kind of corruption of science ("poetism") that is characteristically literary in origin, and, by implication, about a special kind of pseudo-ness in literature and the humane arts generally ("scientism") that can be traced back to an origin in science. I expressed my abhorrence of them both. I was not trying to be gracious and conciliatory when I said, in its last sentences, that my lecture would not have been so very different if it had been inspired by love of literature rather than by love of science; but a defence of the humane arts against mistaken, misapplied or contextually inappropriate scientific notions would have been a much triter theme, and one that I am not specially well qualified to develop. And why should I play an away match when I don't think of myself as playing a match at all?

Holloway has cruelly exposed one or two indiscretions or errors of taste in my lecture. ("Trollopy metaphors," for example. I had doubts when I wrote it. Why *does* one let that kind of thing go by?) He too has lapses of taste, and misquotes me twice, on one occasion seriously. I did not say that "imaginative writing is the same as letting one's fingers stray towards the diapason," nor would I express myself in such a clumsy way. What I said was, "a scientist's fingers . . . must never stray towards the diapason"—and indeed they must not. Nevertheless there are quite a number of things in my lecture which I now wish I had put otherwise, and Holloway is too good a critic not to feel the same about his reply. Let us turn to more serious matters.

FIRST, THE ROMANTICS. Did Coleridge really grasp the idea of a synergism between reason and imagination; between the inventive and critical faculties? I do not wish to sound arrogant, but on this technical and rather specialised subject I am probably the better informed and better read. Holloway makes a bad case for Coleridge, if his quotation is the best evidence he can summon up. My discussion of the matter in my book, *The Art of the Soluble* (1967), shows how very much nearer he actually got. Holloway's quotations show, not that his chosen spokesman understood the gist of the hypothetico-deductive method, but that he himself does not. So far as I know the first writer in English to see scientific method as a dialogue between imaginative proposal and critical disposal, the two together doing what neither could do apart, was William Whewell in *The Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences* (1840). Coleridge had some important elements of that conception, but failed to grasp it as a whole.

I called this a tragedy of cultural history for two reasons: (*a*) Coleridge *could* have got there; he alone had everything it takes—the depth of learning, the intellectual penetration, the philosophic and scientific tastes; my admiration for him is such that I would stretch the evidence almost beyond reason to give him credit for a prescience which he did not in fact possess. (*b*) Whewell's scientific methodology was overshadowed for nearly 100 years by Mill's, and for reasons that deserve a special investigation by students of the history of ideas—because so much of the modern rivalry or sense of tension between science and literature has grown out of the idea that "scientific method" is a precise formulary of intellectual behaviour, a calculus of discovery that supersedes imaginative insight in scientific thought, just as modern technology supersedes ineffectual homely skills.

HOLLOWAY DERIDES my speaking of an "official" Romantic opinion, missing (but this must be my fault) the ironic juxtaposition of the Romantic with the official, *i.e.* Royal Society, point of view. It is now seventy years since Professor Henry Beers told us that the English Romantic movement had "no leader, no programme, no organ, no theory of art, and very little coher-

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ence." No official opinion, then: the point is taken, though one wonders why it should be made.

Yet a belief in the antithesis between Reason and Imagination was a sort of colour-wash under almost the whole of English romantic thought. For Blake on imagination *versus* critical reasoning, refer in particular to his annotations of George Berkeley's *Siris*, or summon up from *Jerusalem* the Spectre of Rational Power that cast a mildew over Albion; for Blake the imaginative faculty, unlike reasoning, is inborn, innate, a manifestation of divinity in man; anyone who thinks otherwise is a fool or a knave.

The distinction Shelley draws, in his *Defence of Poetry*, between the proper domains of reason and imagination gains special force from his having told Elizabeth Hitchener ten years beforehand that he had "rejected all fancy, all imagination . . . I am now an undivided votary of reason." A man who changes sides must be specially aware that there are sides to change. The *Defence* was, of course, a defence against Peacock's *Four Ages*, but on this point they did not disagree. It is implicit in Peacock's argument that reason and imagination compete with each other; much of Shelley's defence is against the imputation that reason was gaining the upper hand. In his Introduction to the *Encyclopaedia Metropolitana*, Coleridge saw the poetic impulsion as "a mighty, inward power, a feel- *quod nequeo monstrare, et sentio tantum*," and in Chapter XIII of *Biographia Literaria* there is a famous passage in which exercise of the "primary imagination" is seen as a microcosmic rehearsal of the primordial act of creation itself, "a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite *I AM*."

I am not quite sure what Holloway intends us to infer from Arnold's passage on Sophocles; the passages I myself had in mind were from *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time*, and here he will be found to express just the opinions I attribute to him.

To GO BACK TO synergism. Can it be that Holloway takes "synergism" to mean no more than that a poet or other artist will scrutinise his own work very critically before he is satisfied with the result? I think not, because the synergism to which I was referring represented (so I said) "the most important methodological discovery of modern thought". For me the most interesting and exciting of all intellectual problems is *how* the imagination is harnessed for the performance of scientific work, so that the steam, instead of blowing off in picturesque clouds and rattling the lid of the kettle, is now made to turn a wheel. Literature and the fine arts have a cognate problem, but its solution, whatever it may be (and there must surely be more than one), is not the same.

It is towards a solution of that other great problem that Holloway, in his later paragraphs, is reaching out. I do not disagree with what he says and do not think that Aristotle would have done so either; my only complaint is that the context of his argument should be an attack on my own opinions. If he had said that my Romanes Lecture was not fully worked out and offers no definitive solution of any of the problems with which it deals, I should have agreed with him completely. I am groping: so is he. But it really is perverse of him to construe the lecture as a covert attack on literature in general. Of Poetic Truth I said that people might claim for it that

> it represents truth, not of a higher kind, but simply of a different kind; an alternative conception . . . which enriches our understanding of the actual by making us move and think and orientate ourselves in "a domain wider than the actual." I believe this view is essentially a fair one . . . [but] great difficulties arise *when it is allowed to infiltrate into science*.

Elsewhere I spoke of a literary syndrome *in scientific or quasi-scientific thought*, and quite early in my lecture I undertook to illustrate its bad influence on the behavioural *sciences*. Surely my intentions were clear enough?

Again, Holloway is very scornful when he attributes to me the opinion (I am quoting him now) that

> science and literature have a common goal in that each has "important things to say," in that *both* "give an account of *ourselves* and investigate *our condition*"!

In fact, I said something quite different: that both science and literature have very important things to say about the behavioural sciences, and that

> *these subjects lie within the compass of literature* in so far as they have to do with human hopes, fears, beliefs and motives; with the attempt to give an account of ourselves and investigate our condition. . . .

Holloway and I are very far apart here: I simply don't know what is preying on his mind.

HOLLOWAY ENDS his critique with George Chapman on obscurity. I do not know the context, so cannot say whether I have improved on him or not. As a medical scientist I have always taken Thomas Browne as chief spokesman for the voluptuary element in incomprehension ("I love to lose myself in a mystery . . ." etc.) and am quite sure I cannot improve on what Coleridge

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had to say on the matter (*Aphorisms on Spiritual Religion*, VIII).

But in all this disputatious talk about Reason and Imagination and what reality really consists of, is there not a danger that we may overlook what George John Romanes had to say himself? Let me make amends for having declined, in my lecture, to quote his poetry. Here is a fragment of Romanes' memorial poem to Darwin. We are to imagine Romanes in a paroxysm of grief at the sheer unreasonableness of Darwin's being taken away from us.

"The struggle cease," he counsels himself,

And when the calm of Reason comes to thee,
Behold in quietness of sorrow peace.
By such clear light e'en in thine anguish see
That Nature, like thyself, is rational;
And let that sight to thee such sweetness bring
As all that now is left of sweetness shall:
So let thy voice in tune with Nature sing,
And in the ravings of thy grief be not
Upon her lighted face thyself a blot.

This poem was specially selected for us by a distinguished man of letters and a former President of Magdalen College, T. Herbert Warren; *why*, God only wot.

The Hermit

Everything that happens is a message:
Sleeplessness, stars out of sight, a misprint on a page,
The shape of that sack in the broken window pane.

I am fifty if you ask me but my age
Like my smell is meaningless. It measures
The air I have used, the decay in my teeth
And the walls of my hut. It is not the age of stone
Or even its strength that speaks to me:
Only its stillness.

She was never still. She wore hats
That made me laugh and scream. Naked
She made demands that turned me into a dog.

You may say I should never have married
And I would agree if it were any consequence
But it no longer matters. The night she tore my arm
And spat in my blood she gave me
The sanctity of an object the colourless varnish
That preserves from diminishing contacts the glaze
That protects my human skin while those messages
Shuttle through the day and night and transform
The sores on my hands into crystal flowers.

I am a man made free. My hut stands
In the corner of the field. The rats run in the rocks
The rooks congregate above me. My feet
Are wrapped in sacks my food is mouldy
But the foreshore is my kingdom, finding
Objects and listening to the waves I am
Collecting signals: the bones of a dead bird

A mollusc in a pool of purple water, sadness
A piece of wormeaten wood I am collating
A notation of the universe for the birth of a word
I need my solitude.

Emyr Humphreys

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LETTERS

"Progressivism as a Reactionary Utopia"

MAY I make clear my bias at the outset by explaining that I have taught happily at Dartington for six years. I feel that your biographical note underneath Professor Cox's review of Maurice Ash's *Who Are The Progressives Now?* [ENCOUNTER, May] might have more specifically indicated his bias.

Professor Cox makes play with the pronouncements of Dr. Winnicott; first of all quoting him as if he were an educational expert and then laughing at him because he finds him an ignorant educational expert. Truth to tell, Dr. Winnicott is not an educational psychologist but a child psychologist (an important distinction that is surely by now understood in Manchester) and therefore no more of an expert on Progressive education than Professor Cox, though perhaps more humble about his lack of expertise. What Dr. Winnicott was actually talking about was the possible effect on the Progressive Schools of a large incursion of State-financed maladjusted children.

Apart from the above inaccuracy, Professor Cox adopts two points of view that are tediously familiar to those of us who teach at places like Dartington. The first is that Summerhill is our Garden of Eden. This is only true in the sense that most of us are aware that somebody made a mistake in the Garden of Eden. The second is that cooperation and kindness are synonymous in the educational world with intellectual sloppiness, abrogation of standards, abdication of the role of the teacher, lack of "cutting edge," a plague that is spreading through the country and so on. In reply to this polarised kind of argument I can only say that I make the rules in my classroom, just like any teacher anywhere, and that these rules are based on a belief that what is being done should be done properly. Outside class the whole community makes the rules, and why not? Insecurity, competition and resentment are with us all the time without our having to create them artificially. It is the latter course that we reject and in rejecting it we are considered odd. Yet my friends in the "real" world would seem to get on by merit and inclination rather than through fear and resentment specially created by their employers.

There seems to be a certain simplemindedness in the mental attitudes of Professor Cox.

JOHN WIGHTWICK

Dartington Hall,
Devon

IT'S A RELIEF to hear that Dr. Winnicott is not competent to speak on education. In the list of participants in the Dartington colloquy he is simply called a "psychologist." I'm glad Mr. Wightwick has doubts about A. S. Neill and Summerhill. In *Who Are The Progressives Now?* Professor Harry Rée says: "Neill himself, sadly enough, doesn't seem to realise what an enormous debt huge numbers of us owe to him." I am indeed simple-minded; I believe children must often be made to work, and that otherwise they tend to grow lazy.

C. B. Cox

University of Manchester

Left or Right

MAY I MAKE one factual correction to Mr. Rudolf Klein's very interesting and otherwise fair-minded review of my book *Left or Right* in your April issue? In this book I suggest three classifications: egalitarian *v.* elitist, radical *v.* orthodox, and liberal *v.* authoritarian. Despite their many weaknesses I put them forward as an improvement on a simple reliance on *left* and *right* alone.

Mr. Klein's argument against the suggested classifications hangs on his belief that they show Roy Jenkins and Michael Foot "first cousins as far as their attitudes are concerned." This is mistaken. If any reader cares to examine the charts for himself, he will find that on the egalitarian-elitist axis the two men are very far apart indeed. They are in fact placed quite as far apart as they would be on a conventional left-right axis, which Mr. Klein regards as "in many ways" a more satisfactory instrument of prediction. I do make it clear several times in the course of the book that the egalitarian-elitist dimension contains in my view most of the residue of meaning in *left* and *right.* On this axis Mr. Jenkins is placed very much nearer to Mr. Heath than he is to Mr. Foot, which should surely meet with the approval of any political correspondent.

Neither terminology gives more than a hint of the exact differences between the two men's attitudes, or explains the historical experiences to which they have reacted. The question at issue is whether matters should be left there, or whether it is worth bringing in two additional dimensions. The liberal-authoritarian axis does demonstrate the fact that in Mr. Klein's words "on the libertarian issues the two men tend to be on the same side." The radical-orthodox classification demonstrates that in the period 1964–7 (beyond which my book could not go), Roy Jenkins was more radical than Harold Wilson on most of the key issues of the day. I really fail to see how recording these other aspects, however imperfectly, gives one a poorer predictive instrument than the conventional one-dimensional classification in which Michael Foot appears at one end in the Labour Party spectrum, Roy Jenkins at the other, with Harold Wilson in between.

Questions such as how near one man is to another in his views do not have the same simple answer on a three-dimensional classification as they have on the one-dimensional variety, as it is necessary to record people's distances from each other on all three axes. Mr. Klein's error is to treat three dimensions as if they were one and to try and work out some sort of average rating for his examples.

Old habits die hard.

SAMUEL BRITTAN

London

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The Revolt against Hitler

A Reply to David Astor — By CHRISTOPHER SYKES

REPLYING TO Mr. David Astor is not an altogether easy task for me as so many points which he makes in a spirit of contradiction are identical with those I have tried to make in my book about Adam von Trott, and in my article in ENCOUNTER (December 1968). Mr. Astor describes my writing as beautiful and sincere, but it is evident from the impressions he has carried away from it that I am a stranger to the art of clarity. Nonetheless, as he writes as spokesman for the survivors of the 1944 conspiracy, he compels an answer. I only have space to touch on a few of his objections [June].

1. It is alleged that I have not "adequately examined the British side of this story," and I take it that he implies that I have shirked this task out of fear of discovering "a British share of responsibility for a failure to prevent or shorten the war." If I quote far more German official documents than British ones, it is because there are far more such German documents to quote. No British official documents directly concerning the case of Trott have yet been published. It seems evident that in the war there was a Trott dossier in the Foreign Office and by 1975, under the 30-year Rule, all its contents should be available to researchers. Until then the German documents on the subject predominate. If, however, Mr. Astor means that I show in my book and my article a fond and nationalistic partiality for those of my countrymen who before and in the war dismissed the conspirators as mischievous and wrong-headed, I apologise, condemn myself, and can only plead my incapacity to express myself as I would like to.

2. In my article I remarked that the little acclaim accorded over the years to the German resistance may be (in part) due to the fact that it completely failed. I said that in practical terms the July conspiracy achieved no more than the tragic anti-Nazi rising of the Munich students of 1943. Mr. Astor alleges that I seem "inclined to accept this comparison and verdict." The comparison (in strictly practical terms of result) I must reluctantly accept. But what does he mean by the verdict? That I regard the failure of both risings, (indeed all failure) as deserving of contempt? I think the most careless reader is not justified in such an impression.

3. Mr. Astor proceeds to draw a distinction between resistance against an occupying force and against a "dictatorship of your fellow countrymen." I refer him to the last paragraph of my article. I found it clear, but perhaps it was not.

4. The German Resistance sought help from abroad before and during the War. It was refused by Great Britain in the former case, and by Great Britain and the United States in the second. In my book and my article I tried to show why this anti-Nazi endeavour has since the war been criticised in Britain, and what was its undoubted justification. I am in agreement with what Mr. Astor says on the subject until (after repeating that I rely too much on German as opposed to British authorities) he says that "like almost all the British officials of that time, Mr. Sykes seems to assume that the German opposition . . . ought to have been able to make a revolution without cooperation from abroad." If I "seem" to assume such a view, then I beg Mr. Astor to read p. 238 of my book, and if the opaque character of my prose still leaves him with his conviction, then I cheerfully indulge in further self-condemnation.

5. I refer now to Mr. Astor on p. 5, par. 4. Whatever the obscurity of my mode of writing, he should not, if he read me with any attention, have asserted that, referring to German army commanders, I imply "mysteriously that the generals of other nations have a tradition of 'glorious revolution'." In my article I referred to the fact that "people abroad" *i.e.*, outside Germany, "belonged to traditions that took pride in their 'glorious revolution'." The quoted phrase may be unknown to Mr. Astor but it is current idiom. To most readers it is not mysterious. I did not think it necessary to explain that by "people abroad" I meant peoples, not only their generals.

6. Mr. Astor comes to a more interesting point when he deals with the Halder-Witzleben conspiracy of 1938. What I meant by an "escapist legend" in my article in ENCOUNTER (December 1968, p. 47 par. 3) does *not* refer to the undoubted fact that Chamberlain's attendance at the Munich conference ruled out the practicability of mounting the conspiracy after he had taken his decision, but to the opinion by which "it is held as axiomatic that Chamberlain's failure to stake all on the Halder-Witzleben conspiracy was a monstrous failure of statesmanship *because the conspiracy was bound to succeed.*" This I do regard as myth. Mr. Astor has nothing to say about the conspirators' delay nor about Witzleben's reported doubts as to whether the plot could possibly succeed. He follows with some more misreporting. He alleges that I believe "in a *specifically* German proneness 'to blame other people for their errors and mistakes'." (my italics). What I said was: "The Germans are perhaps even more prone than most to blame . . . etc." Not quite the same.

7. Mr. Astor's last paragraph on p. 6. Mr. Astor really must have one more bash at my difficult prose. He thinks I am "inclined to interpret all Trott's ideas as motivated mainly by German

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nationalism." I have explained in my book (pp. 81–82) at some length what I mean by Trott's nationalism: a noble element in the German ethos, remote from military aggression and quite compatible with the internationalism he sought. The strongest single piece of evidence of Trott's nationalism is in a long correspondence with a young English woman. Mr. Astor quotes from the letters in this very remarkable collection, and later in the article he suggests, as Mr. R. H. S. Crossman did in the review which he wrote for *The Observer*, that I showed poor judgment in attaching the importance I did to them. The most significant of the letters I quote were written when Trott was in China and his friend was in England, and he had no reason to fear Nazi censorship. Unlike others of his letters these show no trace of disguise. It seems to me that if this massive document in fact does not reflect Trott's mind, as it seems to do, then

To An Angry

I COULD MASSAGE *your heartstrings or curl your hair, depending on your politics, by quoting from the torrential reaction (laudatory, furious, flattering, venomous) to my evangelical letter* To an Angry Young Student [ENCOUNTER, *Feb.*] *Before it was printed a friend urged me to soften my stand, saying, "It may play into the hands of the Right!" And of the sermon you are about to read, others may say, "It will play into the hands of the Left!"*

Both positions seem to me indefensible. Surely, the validity of an idea has nothing to do with who agrees or disagrees with it. To censor the expression of your thinking because of whom it may please or displease is simply to let others do your thinking for you. I detest thought control. Here, sans *apology, is my answer to some overheated letter writers from the Right.*

DEAR MR. X:

Thank you for writing—and that's about all the thanks you'll get from me. You say, "Let's throw all these young rebels out of college!" Over my dead body. Free speech does not stop at the gates of a campus. On the contrary, it should find a special sanctuary there, for it is indispensable to the search for truth. A student has a perfect right to protest, picket, petition, dissent. When students riot, set fires, throw rocks, stop others from attending classes, use bullhorns to disrupt the peace—they are acting not as students but as hoodlums. Let the law attend to them—the swifter the better.

But you *want students "thrown out" simply for protesting, which is what the Communists and Fascists do—from Russia to Spain, China to Cuba.* They *expel, intimidate or imprison those who question or complain. Don't emulate them.*

YOU SAY, *"Draft these college punks into the Army and let our GIs knock sense into their heads!" You horrify me. I don't want anyone to "knock sense" into anyone's head. To put the point sharply, I quote a great jurist: "Your freedom to move your fist ends at the point where my nose begins." I have a long nose.*

As for the draft: I consider the present draft impractical, unnecessary and morally indefensible (it would take more than this page to explain why). The young have every right to speak, petition and argue against it (this has nothing to do with Viet Nam)—peacefully.

"Why let these creeps wear stinking clothes and beards? Line them up, hold them down, bathe them, shave them, wash out their mouths with soap!!" I loathe your bullyboy views more than their childish flight into dirtiness. Kooky clothes break no laws (though courts have *ruled on schoolboard regulations governing dress, hair, etc.). Young slobs pollute the nearby air—but the courts have not yet ruled on that.*

The defiant cultivation of filth is, of course, a clinical sign of psychological disturbance. I feel sorry for the kids who cannot know the psychological price they will pay for regressing to the anal level. But your excessive response to the dirty is as distasteful to me as their sad glorification of discomfort disguised as "freedom."

You praise me for "speaking out for those students who are not newsworthy because they don't riot" and add: "Defend our wonderful Establishment!" Well, the only Establishment I defend is the one called Reason. I find violence abhorrent, fanaticism disgusting, and demagoguery unspeakable. The terrorist tactics of adolescents may parade as "idealism," but they shatter that consensus of civility that is the very heart of a civilisation. Your blind veneration of the status quo cannot help us solve problems that must and can be solved—by intelligence, not force.

YOU ASK, *"What do students have to be so unhappy about in our colleges?" A great deal: gargantuan classes and bursting dormitories; professors who hate teaching because it interferes with their research; educator-bureaucrats who reward the publication of trivia much more than dedication to students and teaching; academic tenure, which encourages some pedants to "goof off" in lectures and subsidises others to indulge their non-academic hobbies.*

But this does not mean we should turn our colleges over to self-dramatising militants whose most conspicuous talent is a capacity to oversimplify problems whose complexity they do not begin to comprehend. Rabble-rousers (Right or *Left) are rabble-rousers, no matter what songs they sing, with what lumps in their throats, with whatever ambiguous dreams in their eyes. Nazi students also flaunted "rights" they held superior to the lawful process of 'hypocritical," "fake" democracy—and many of their professors, in Germany and Austria, cheered them on.*

Rebels who think they should prevail because *they dissent are deluded: Dissenters have no*

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it throws an unpleasant light on him: it shows him as a person of frivolous insincerity, and something of a fool. For that reason I do not accept the Astor-Crossman estimate of the papers. I believe he meant what he said.

Mr. Astor seems to have rather an old-fashioned attitude to the female sex. "Letters to women friends" he regards as light evidence by their very nature, and he refers to "the (to me) unconvincing remark of the lady who suggested that his attitude to the Slavonic people at the end of the war was not different altogether to that of the Nazis." In this passage Mr. Astor faintly but effectively misquotes the lady. (See my book, p. 420.) I should add that this lady-like personage is a formidable authority on modern Europe of which she is a most distinguished historian.

8. On p. 8 Mr. Astor launches a vigorous attack

Old Man

greater moral or political rights than non-dissenters.

YOU ASK, *"What has basically bugged these hippies, anyway?" First, their parents, I suspect, who confused political liberalism with indecisiveness; who felt so guilty about discipline that they appeased temper tantrums and rewarded rage with concessions (forgetting that infants* want *boundaries placed on their freedom); who never gave their progeny a clear model of responsible conduct. I think many militant students are unconsciously searching for adults who will act as adults—without apology or ambivalence or guilt; adults who will not be bamboozled by adolescent irrationality; adults who respond with swift rebuffs to those challenges to authority that are, at bottom, a testing by the young of the moral* confidence *of their elders. Professor David Riesman says we are witnessing the rebellion of the first generation in history "who were picked up whenever they cried."*

YOU SAY, *"Why not show the young how wonderful our educational system is?" It is remarkable in what it has done (the greatest, widest mass education in history) and in what it* can *achieve. But I hold a very gloomy view about schools that can produce students (and teachers) who are so strikingly ignorant about (1) how this society actually works; (2) what the economic bases of a democracy must be; (3) what the irreplaceable foundations of freedom, and the inviolable limits of civil liberties, must be; (4) how conflicts between minorities and majorities must be managed. (Suppose that Ku Klux Klanners in Alabama occupied classrooms, asserted the right to appoint faculty, threatened to burn down buildings, and demanded total amnesty in advance?)*

Immature students are mesmerised by utopian slogans that rest on fantasies; and they are ill-educated enough to mouth the obsolete clichés of anarchism, the "revolutionary" nostrums even Lenin called "infantile leftism," the grandiose "demands" that demonstrate a plain lack of sense and a massive ignorance of history. ("Student power" has simply ruined South and Central American universities.)

YOU ASK, *"Why doesn't anyone brand these troublemakers as the Communists they are?!" That organisers plan and foment trouble, going from campus to campus, is becoming clearer each day. That they are professed Communists is neither clear nor likely. Student incantations about Ho Chi Minh, Che, and Mao are not so much evidence of Communism as of naiveté. The young enjoy baiting their elders with shocking symbols, and ignore what Che, Ho, and Mao stand for—total despotism over the mind. Dictatorship is no less vicious because it* claims *to seek "superior" freedom.*

Students who are not *Communists are, alas, employing Communist/Fascist tactics: "confrontations" designed to force the authorities to call in the police—and then to force the police to use force, which is decried (and televised) and used for propaganda purposes. They dare not reflect on what Mao has done to the Chinese "student cadres" he encouraged; or on what happens to students who criticise the Establishment in Moscow or Havana.*

YOU SAY, *"Professor Marcuse should not be allowed to teach at San Diego!" Dr. Marcuse has a right to say or write whatever he wants—however mushy, opaque, unsupported by data, insupportable in logic and ludicrous as economics it is. His competence and integrity as a teacher are for his colleagues—not you or me—to decide. And if San Diego has no professors who are able to punch holes in old Herbert's gaseous balloons, it should promptly hire some.*

Incidentally, Marcuse, like you, wants to deny freedom of speech to "certain" people; you and he differ only on whom you want to confer the blessings of dictatorship: Marcuse has publicly said (at Rutgers, June 1965) that since Negroes are "brainwashed," and presumably vote in a hypnotised manner, "I would prefer that they did not have the right to choose wrongly." Such thinking fills prisons and concentration camps.

FINALLY, *to my angry old* and *young compatriots: If we cannot pursue knowledge with moderation and mutual respect in our colleges, then where on earth can we? "Society cannot exist," wrote Burke, "[without] a controlling power upon will.... The less of it there is within, the more theire must be without... Men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters."*

Leo Rosten
in LOOK MAGAZINE (*New York*)

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on the change of attitude by Sir John Wheeler-Bennett from late 1939, when he was Trott's confidant in America, to late 1941 when he abandoned all hope in the German opposition and later came to be an apologist for "Unconditional Surrender." The attack would be very much more effective if Mr. Astor could have brought himself to consider seriously the piece of evidence which superficially told against Trott, namely his association with the *Indienreferat* in which he and Subhas Chandra Bose were the moving spirits in late 1941. The purpose of this department of the German Foreign Office was to raise an Indian Legion from Indian prisoners-of-war to fight with the Axis against the Allies. He and the Indian nationalist leader appeared together in P.O.W. camps in Italy in order to raise recruits. Italy was a main Allied source of Intelligence about the enemy. Until British documents are open to investigation it is impossible to prove, but it seems the strongest possible probability that Trott's association with the *Indienreferat* was known in the Middle East and London in its early stages. Given his Left-wing anti-Imperialist feeling, Trott may have taken part in this enterprise in an ambivalent spirit. Certain it is that he never lost thereby his anti-Nazi conviction. But if the whole thing was camouflage, then surely, in judging a loss of trust, one must take account of the likely effect on an Englishman of camouflage activity which not only deceived Trott's Nazi superiors, but some of his anti-Nazi collaborators. I refer the reader, especially Mr. Astor, to chapter 14 of my book. It's worth having a go, despite the limitations on my style of which Mr. Astor has made me aware.

9. Mr. Astor mentions Wilfrid Israel, whom I used to meet in Berlin many years ago. I join Mr. Astor in his admiration of that fine man's unwavering faith in Trott. But to conclude from this, and from the fact that Trott accepted a Rhodes House subsidy to enable him to travel to China, and from the further fact that he maintained close friendships with Sir Stafford Cripps, Reinhold Niebuhr and Lord Lothian, that there could have been no element of nationalism in him seems to me extravagant. I am reminded of those who say that all criticism of T. E. Lawrence is invalidated by the fact that Winston Churchill admired him. (I suppose I must add that I see no particular resemblance between Lawrence and Trott.)

10. Then Mr. Astor moves "incidentally" to an unconsidered account of the influence of the "Final Solution" on the Allied "Unconditional Surrender" policy. I am said to "hazard a guess that the British Government was high-mindedly motivated against dealing with the German opposition after 1942 by Hitler's mass extermination of the Jews and the British use of this supreme atrocity in propaganda." I will not enlarge on the contradiction inherent in this sentence, but will quote from my ENCOUNTER article: "By 1943 [the Final Solution] was widely known about and took a prominent part in Allied propaganda. The result was to add a new dimension to the hatreds of war and there sprang up a longing for vengeance on the Germans." In my book I mentioned the conjunction of this indignation with the battle for Stalingrad. Mr. Astor is moved by these passages to repeat (without any hint of contradiction) the grossest allegations of extremist Zionist propaganda to the effect that (with the Palestine problem in mind) Churchill's Government secretly aided the Nazi genocide movement. Hochhuth forward!

11. I think I need not occupy space in rebutting Mr. Astor when he says that my assertion (on evidence) that Lord Halifax's speech on 29 June 1939 (to which Trott contributed some ideas) failed in its object, indicates that I regard the ideas and methods of the German opposition as futile. He moves to more interesting matter on p. 10 par. 7. This concerns Trott's report to his superiors in Germany on his visit to Cliveden on 3 June 1939 and his subsequent meeting with Neville Chamberlain. The report (published among documents captured in Germany) caused a ridiculous scandal in the British press when first made public. It was intended for Hitler himself, so was (very sensibly) written in Nazi terms, but analysis has long shown that it had no Nazi intention.

Mr. Astor says: "Today, more can be known. For instance, that Trott's report... was typed by Wilfrid Israel's secretary and jointly composed by two of his closest conspiratorial friends, Peter and Christabel Bielenberg, all of whom happen to be alive and here to be cross-examined—if anyone is interested."

I was much "interested" by knowledge of this when writing my book and examined Mr. and Mrs. Bielenberg with profit. But the really interesting new information, even more arresting than the identity of the typist, seems to have escaped Mr. Astor's notice, though it was published for the first time, so far as I know, in my book and then in my article. It is contained in the surviving correspondence of Hubert Ripka with an English friend of Trott, and with Winston Churchill. This shows that Trott's 1939 mission was not the unplanned foray that has been supposed, but had a defined purpose. This was to put forward to political leaders in England a suggestion that a German withdrawal from Bohemia would be rewarded by a readjustment of the Polish-German frontier. It was not a Nazi plan, but an attempt to influence Nazi policy from within, so it seems. In my book I attributed the plan to Weizsäcker but I may be mistaken.

12. My last point. Mr. Astor asserts that "the general thesis" of my book is "that Trott only reached an unequivocally anti-Nazi attitude half-way through the war...." This statement I do not contradict but would qualify. Mr. Astor says earlier in his article that before the war Trott's "real motives were those of attempting peaceful compromise between rival ideologies." That seems correct. Not till his return to Germany in 1940 did Trott see that no compromise with Hitler of any sort was possible.

He was young, patriotic, intensely optimistic. He was an anti-Nazi from 1933, yet he fought (and who but a dolt would deny him sympathy) against the terrible logic of events. This sometimes made his attitude appear equivocal. In a very limited sense it was. But when all his illusions were destroyed, including one about British generosity (at the Casablanca conference), he stuck to his essential anti-Nazi

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faith with redoubled resolution. That he found the spiritual reserve to do so gives the measure of his mind and soul. To insist, as some of Trott's friends like to do, understandably enough, but in disregard of a volume of evidence, that there was no deviation in his view and purpose from first to last seems to me to misinterpret a great story of human fortitude beset with temptation. It is to prefer the anaemic beauties of hagiographic obituary to the daunting poetry of the facts.

How to Change the System

On Dr. Mishan's University Reforms — By J. F. Maitland-Jones

Dr. E. J. Mishan is not only so right in much of his argument, but also so timely in expressing it, that one is tempted to overlook the limitations of his "heretical thoughts" [Encounter, March]. But no one who is not an economist, and surely very few of those who are, can seriously go along with him when he claims that "the current threat to the universities can be removed by simple institutional changes," *i.e.*, by the disclosure of the full, true costs of higher education, and the substitution of loans for student grants. This is a peg-legged argument at best (and our understanding of it is not helped by Dr. Mishan's failure to define his notion of "the threat" facing universities), stumping along in search of the truncated limb on which the support for university reform more sensibly depends.

It may well be good for us to know the value of any article that we purchase (including university education) as distinct from its apparent cost. But even if we know, say, that the true cost of a three-year course in the humanities is £5,000, it is hard to see that any threat to the universities (whether it emanates from government, or from students, or from the dons themselves) is thereby averted. It may well be true, as Dr. Mishan mentions, that a more informed atmosphere of debate on university costs and usefulness will be achieved. But that is another matter.

And one could take Dr. Mishan's proposals for student loans instead of grants more seriously if only he had made some suggestions as to the source of these loans. The question of repayment is crucial in determining who will risk the money, and through what channels. The Local Education Authorities? By the time individual credit-worthiness and the susceptibilities of the rate-payers have been taken into consideration, the beleaguered academic garrison at the L.S.E. will find it has no problems, and no livelihood, and no students either. The normal channels of finance, the banks and hire-purchase houses? They might, if this were finance of the order of a three-piece suite or a tenor saxophone. But if Dr. Mishan expects to recoup the whole of the full-cost pricing then loans must offer sums like £5,000, extend repayments over a lifetime, forgo sizeable deposits, and above all be available to the children of defaulters or criminals or lunatics to whom financial credit (but not necessarily a university education) is normally denied. It is difficult to envisage private enterprise providing the finance under these conditions. But the whole point would be lost if Government stepped into the breach—because its only reason for doing so would have to be either to offer advantageous terms to those requiring money for university education, or to underwrite the costs of bad debts—in which case it might just as well have stuck to the grants system in the first place.

Interesting as both Dr. Mishan's proposals are, they do nothing by themselves to protect universities from the excesses of government or student power, or students from the vagaries of their teachers and administrators, or society from the dottiness of dons and students' difficulties in settling to adult life—which are the real problems of university life today. As a means of solving these problems, the embryo proposals for an Independent University (that is, independent of government finance and, hence, of government control), seem to me to make much more sense. While they share Dr. Mishan's aim to ascertain and publish the true costs of university education and to induce the individual (*not* the state) to meet these costs, they have been devised to run *concurrently* with the present system, not to supersede it. Thus they provide both students and dons with an area of true choice, where competition for resources (both financial and academic) will ensure that the needs of students, as well as those of their teachers and the outside world, will be met. If they aren't, then for the first time the student will be able to vote with his feet and take his custom elsewhere, back to the existing system. Similarly, supporters of the Independent University propose that dons too should undergo the advantages as well as the penalties of shifting tenure and forgo the safety of lifelong tenure. This proposal, if implemented, should do more than any other to meet students' complaints about those who teach them.

More radically still, supporters of the Independent University look to industry and commerce for the support they do not wish to have to accept from Government. They have yet to make out a strong case why Industry—committed already to support of universities whose academic policies as well as end-products it increasingly distrusts—should open its coffers to supply the wherewithal. But there are, nevertheless, good and compelling reasons why industry and higher education would both benefit from a closer relationship. With the calibre as well as the basic training of recruits from university

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frequently criticised, and with the fundamental motives of industry queried as often as they are in academic common rooms, more meaningful contact between the two parties is long overdue. With captains of industry nearly as invisible to the academic world as they are to their own lower echelons, the students' image of middle management intent only on its perks and its pensions is well matched by industry's notions of students and teachers as ineffectual revolutionaries.

To shift these beliefs, and others as fundamental, would require a major exercise of disbelief in most British inherent attitudes. This exercise is long overdue. But it may possibly come about as a result of the fundamental re-thinking involved in setting up the Independent University.

Popper's "Moral Responsibility"

PROFESSOR KARL POPPER'S "The Moral Responsibility of the Scientist" in the March issue of ENCOUNTER is slackly written, confused, and in at least one instance, morally shocking. Professor Popper tells us twice that he has nothing new to say about this topic; and he is right. My only question on this score is why he didn't save space and let the reader have the modest pleasure of discovering this fact for himself. Professor Popper remarks, with evident approval, upon the contention that "the conscience of every human being is the ultimate court of appeal with regard to the question whether a certain command is, or is not, to be resisted." If so, why should not the same hold for the social scientist who, he goes on to say, "has a particular responsibility to warn people of dangers inherent in tools of power and to devote himself to counter measures,"? Similarly, why should everyone have a special responsibility in the field in which he possesses a particular power or knowledge? Why shouldn't everyone be entitled to consult his own conscience in these as in other matters and perhaps decide that he has no such special responsibility? But if (as I myself agree) such responsibilities do weigh heavily upon scientists, who alone *may* be able to gauge the implications of their discoveries, why then can we not blame those who work to "defend" their countries by helping to create such instruments of war as nuclear weapons, poison gases, etc., which can be, have been, and probably will continue to be used indiscriminately against non-combatants as well as combatants?

Furthermore, if the scientist, as a human being, is entitled to decide for himself whether in conscience he is to resist a command, why is not the commander, the politician, including the dictator, not entitled to decide what commands he shall give the scientists

It seems to me quite monstrous to hold as a general proposition that scientists cannot be blamed for working to defend their countries. It depends entirely upon the country. For my part, I do not at all believe that the scientist, like any other citizen, is always caught in a terrible moral difficulty or that nobody can give him advice when his country commits such ghastly war crimes as genocide, dropping atomic bombs upon civilian populations, and the rest. In such instances the betrayal of one's country may be a clear moral obligation, as many brave men, scientists as well as non-scientists, have well understood. And here as elsewhere why should we not give our advice to others when they find themselves in moral difficulties? I should have thought not only that we can, but also that we should advise them, especially when it is a matter of life or death for whole defenceless and innocent populations, or, indeed, for the whole human race.

Not only has Professor Popper not advanced our understanding of the issues which confront morally responsible scientists in regard to nuclear and biological warfare, he has added confusion to confusion. In my view a moral philosopher who is also a philosopher of science has himself a special obligation to weigh his words more carefully than Popper has done in this instance. Whereof one has nothing to say, thereof should one remain silent.

HENRY D. AIKEN

Goldman Professor of Philosophy, Brandeis University, Mass.

THE ISSUES which I discussed in my paper and which are now raised again by Professor Aiken seem to me too serious for personal animosity, and I shall ignore the pinpricks in his letter. Nor do I wish to retaliate when I complain that Professor Aiken's letter, to use his own words, "is slackly written, confused, and in at least one instance morally shocking." I have to make this complaint; for after reading Professor Aiken's letter many times I still do not know for certain what that one instance is to which he is alluding or, indeed, what his arguments are.

The following are the two points which I regard as "shocking": one is the fact that Professor Aiken does not refer to anything by its name (myself excepted), especially not the countries alluded to. While I discussed the war in Viet Nam by name (although it was merely an example from the point of view of my topic), Professor Aiken, whose main topic is this war, never names a country, but operates with mere insinuations.

The second and more important fact is that Professor Aiken cannot imagine that moral issues are not always clear-cut. He sees everything in black and white. For him there can be no clash of obligations, no divided loyalties, no real moral problem. For him the involvement of the United States is not a tragedy; it is merely a crime.

It is only in the light of these observations that his criticism of my paper becomes more or less coherent.

Professor Aiken's protest is provoked, it seems, by my description of the war in Viet Nam (which, I repeat, was definitely not the topic of my paper) as a tragedy, and by my suggestion that it may have started as a genuinely defensive war; that the decision of the United States to intervene may have been due to the intention of the United States

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to stand by their allies and by the various countries in East Asia and South Asia whose freedom and independence are threatened by communist attempts at expansion. Remembering the history of Czechoslovakia (to which I referred) and of Hungary, I am inclined to regard these as "good" intentions, though it is easy to see after the event that these intentions were badly served by political and military advice resting on insufficient as well as misinterpreted information. This is why I referred in my paper to the war in Viet Nam as a tragedy; it arose, or so it seems to me, from the wish to help those who were attacked and not from any aggressive intentions.

I readily admit that I may be mistaken in this historical judgment. Like many other people, among them scientists, I am conscious of the fact that I am biased by my sympathies and hopes; and I know that I have not eaten from the tree of knowledge. Thus I am surprised by Professor Aiken's perfect knowledge of good and evil: his glib assurance that it is as clear as daylight that all the wrong is on the one side (that of the unnamed United States) and all the right on the other.

This explains why in his first two paragraphs Professor Aiken tries to interpret my reference to individual conscience as an approval of moral relativism, arguing (see his second paragraph) that everybody may justify any crime by claiming that he acted in accordance with his conscience. Thus, he suggests, an appeal to conscience establishes irresponsibility. Since this rests on an almost incredible perversion of what I said, I must quote myself (pp. 54–56 of the March ENCOUNTER):

> It was the politicians and the law officers of the various Allied countries who staged the Nuremberg Trials which established the status of war crimes and thereby recognised that the conscience of every human being is the ultimate court of appeal with respect to the question whether a certain command is, or is not, to be resisted. Without contradicting themselves it is impossible for these same politicians and law officers now to assert that it is the duty of the citizen, and of the scientist, not to ask the reason why and to obey any command. The freedom for which we must be prepared to fight is precisely the freedom to resist a command which we feel it would be criminal to obey. It is, I believe, the inescapable duty of every loyal politician in a democracy . . . to champion the rights of the conscientious objector, whether he is a scientist or a soldier.

It should be very clear from this that I pleaded here unambiguously *for individual responsibility rather than irresponsibility*. As to Professor Aiken's somewhat abstract question whether a doctrine of conscience logically suffices to establish this plea I was noncommittal in this passage; but earlier I discussed the status of the principle of minimisation of suffering.

The long passage just quoted shows that I support unambiguously those who feel that there are circumstances in which the refusal to support their country "may be a clear moral obligation, as many brave men, scientists as well as non-scientists, have well understood." (See the middle of Professor Aiken's third paragraph where he insinuates that this is not my view.)

Towards the end of his first paragraph, Professor Aiken writes: "Why then can we not blame those who work to 'defend' their countries by helping to create such instruments of war as nuclear weapons, poison gases, etc. . . .?" And he repeats this view at the beginning of his third paragraph: "It seems to me quite monstrous to hold as a general proposition that scientists cannot be blamed for working to defend their countries." I too think that this is quite monstrous *as a general proposition* —unless the word "defend" is taken seriously, and the scientists are engaged in genuine defence. (By putting "defend" in the first of the two passages between quotation marks, Professor Aiken insinuates that the scientists who created the atom bomb were not *bona fide* engaged in genuinely defensive work.) My own sentence to which these two quotations from Professor Aiken refer made this quite clear; for I wrote (p. 54):

> A scientist who feels that his country is threatened by an attack cannot be blamed for working to defend his country. However, even a just war may get utterly out of hand, and it seems to me unlikely that there can be . . . a war without war crimes on both sides. Thus, once a war has started, the scientist, like any other citizen, is caught in a terrible moral difficulty, and nobody can give him advice.

I did not say, of course, as Professor Aiken suggests in his third paragraph "that the scientist, like any other citizen, is *always* caught in a terrible moral difficulty"; if the "*always*" (my italics) is added, the meaning of what I said is perverted almost into its opposite. What I was trying to make clear was that there are situations in which simple general moral rules may, because of a genuine clash of moral obligations, break down.

It did not occur to me that my paper would be read by anybody to whom this obvious fact would be new. In this I was mistaken.

KARL R. POPPER

University of London

Moravagine

As A geologist, I hope no one takes seriously Blaise Cendrars' ideas about pre-history [ENCOUNTER, November, 1968]. As he, himself, says in the preceding paragraph: "What nonsense!"

R. B. KING

Esher, Surrey

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AUTHORS

George Seferis received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1963. The poem in this number of ENCOUNTER is the first he has written since the volume *Three Secret Poems* was published in 1966. The author, who was formerly Greece's Ambassador in London (1957–1962) is at present living in retirement in Athens. **Edmund Keeley,** together with Philip Sherrard, has translated *Collected Poems: 1924–1955* which Jonathan Cape have just published.

As the epigraph to the new poem seems to imply, "The Cats of St. Nicholas" appears to have come out of the same mood which inspired Seferis' recent statement about the "state of enforced torpor" in intellectual matters which the present régime has brought to Greece, along with other oppressions. The following is the full text of his statement, as reported by the Athens correspondent of *The Times* on 29 March:

"LONG AGO I resolved to remain out of the country's internal politics. This did not mean—and on another occasion I tried to make the point clear—that I was indifferent to our political life. For years now I have in principle abstained from such matters. But what I said in print up to early 1967 and the stand that I have since taken (for since freedom was muzzled I have published nothing in Greece) showed clearly enough what my attitude was.

"Now for some months, however, I have felt, within me and around me, that more and more it is becoming imperative for me to speak out on our present situation. To put it as briefly as possible, this is what I would say:

"It is almost two years since a régime was imposed upon us utterly contrary to the ideals for which our world—and so magnificently our people—fought in the last World War. It is a state of enforced torpor in which all the intellectual values that we have succeeded, with toil and effort, in keeping alive are being submerged in a swamp, in stagnant waters. I can well imagine that for some people these losses do not matter. Unfortunately this is not the only danger that threatens.

"We have all learnt, we all know, that in dictatorial régimes the beginning may seem easy, yet tragedy waits at the end, inescapably. It is this tragic ending that consciously or unconsciously torments us, as in the ancient choruses of Aeschylus.

"The longer the abnormal situation lasts, the greater the evil.

"I am a man completely without political ties and I speak without fear and without passion. I see before us the precipice towards which the oppression that covers the land is leading us. This abnormality must come to an end. It is the nation's command.

"Now I return to silence. I pray to God that never again may I find myself under such compulsion to speak."

WE HAVE ALSO recently received from Athens the following statement signed by **18 Athenian writers:**

Athens, April 23, 1969

"WE FULLY SHARE the indignation of those among us whose names are being used, without their consent, for the compulsory publication of their work in the press, in order to create the impression, both here and abroad, that our country enjoys intellectual freedom.

"There can be no intellectual freedom in the true sense of the word as long as there is censorship, which kills the fruitful exchange of ideas and restrains free and open communication; as long as books are banned; as long as intellectuals are being persecuted for their convictions alone. Intellectual freedom is incompatible with the attempt to stamp out in schools and universities our living language—which is also the language of the poem that became our national anthem, and of our folk literature. All this, which illustrates the intellectual oppression in our country, is but one aspect of the greater ordeal that Greece is undergoing.

"We are well aware that this aspect—which, not unnaturally, concerns us so deeply—is not the only one, nor the most tragic. But freedom is indivisible; and the relevance of intellectual freedom to the dignity of both men and nations has been reaffirmed recently by the Czechoslovak people's heroic struggle to attain it, and by the undaunted protests of non-conforming Russian intellectuals.

"We finally wish to honour George Seferis, because he was the first to point out the ever-growing dangers inherent in the perpetuation of this state of affairs. Let us hope that the poet's voice will not prove to be the voice of another Cassandra."

(Signed)[1]

1. ALEXANDROS ARGHYRIOU
2. MICHAELA AVEROFF
3. KAY CICELLIS
4. JASON DEPOUNTIS
5. TH. D. FRANGOPOULOS
6. PANTELIS KALIOTSOS
7. LINA KASDAGLIS
8. NICOS KASDAGLIS
9. ALEXANDROS KOTZIAS
10. MENIS KOUMANDAREAS
11. TAKIS KOUFOPOULOS
12. KOSTOULA MITROPOULOU
13. RODIS ROUFOS
14. COSTAS TAKTSIS
15. LILY YAKOVIDIS
16. GEORGE YERALIS
17. THANASSIS VALTINOS
18. FONTAS KONDYLIS

[1] Nos. 3, 8, 10, 11 and 12 are included in the State Anthology referred to in the first paragraph. Nos. 5, 8, 9, 10 12, 13, 15 and 16 have been awarded literary prizes. Nos. 2, 3, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14 have been translated into foreign languages.

V. S. Pritchett's autobiography, *A Cab at the Door*, was published in 1968. His works of literary criticism include *The Living Novel* (1946), *Books in General* (1953), and *The Working Novelist* (1965). Among his books of travel and foreign reportage are *The Spanish Temper* (1954), *New York Proclaimed* (1965), and *Dublin* (1967). Chatto & Windus will publish *Blind Love and other Stories* later this year.

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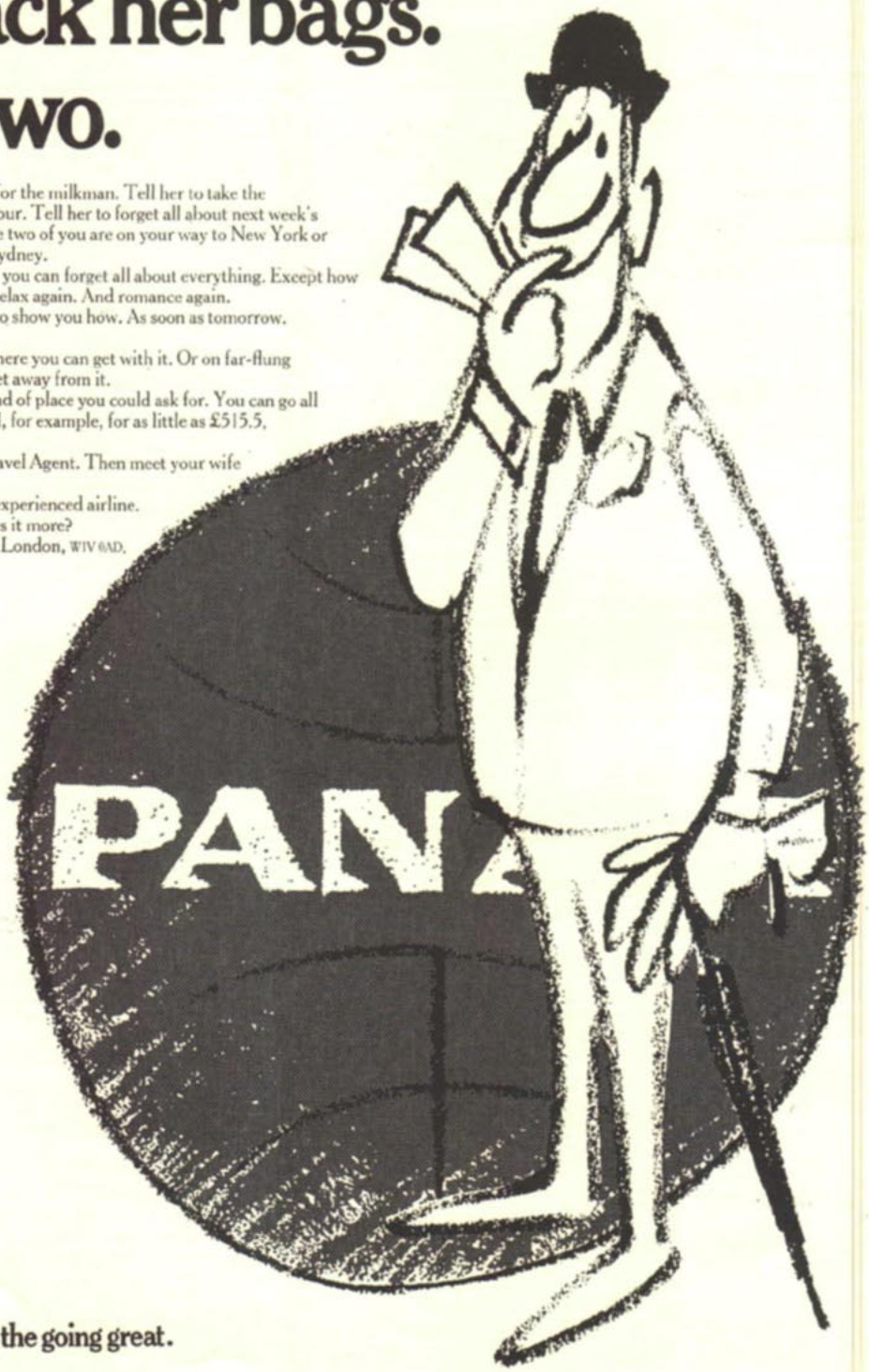

Pan Am makes the going great.

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